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A HISTORY

OF THE LORDSHIP OF

KINGS' CLIPSTONE,

OR CLIPSTONE IN SHERWOOD,
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE.

*Reprinted from the "Mansfield and North Notts.
Advertiser," September 19th—November 14th, 1890.*

100 COPIES PRINTED.

I allow no man for a Judge who hath not done
something of this nature himself.—Thoroton.

PRICE HALF-A-CROWN.

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PREFACE.

This little work—merely the outcome of the study of local history as a hobby—was written with a view to popular publication. On this account it was produced in short chapters with brief paragraphs, though the latter were in part unavoidable, on account of the fragmentary character of the materials. Also, long dissertations were avoided, and where it was deemed necessary to dip into comparatively extraneous matter the passages were condensed as much as possible,—indeed conciseness has been attempted throughout. All notes, explanations, and commentaries have been included in the text, and—while omitting no single accessible item—everything not directly connected with the subject has been excluded. The chronological arrangement, it is hoped, will in some measure compensate for the lack of an index. By such means I have endeavoured to produce, not merely a collection of data, but a *readable* history.

Possibly I have made an unwarrantable departure in withholding my authorities, except in a few odd instances. I have done so because the great majority of readers do not care to know them, and it would, in a measure, break the continuity of a chronicle, while those versed in subjects of this class know quite well where to look for them. Briefly, however, I must here acknowledge the sources to which I am principally indebted.

First and foremost, of course, without staying to particularise the works, comes that *sine qua non*

to the local historian, the splendid series comprised under the general title of the "Government Record Publications." From these, in particular the State Papers, Close Rolls, and Original Rolls, the bulk of the material has been gleaned.

Pretty well all local works also, from the indispensable Thoroton downwards, have been searched and the relevant matter abstracted.

The passages relating to the visits of Henry II., not previously recorded locally, are from Eyton's excellent itinerary of that king, a work which supersedes the hitherto unsurpassed "outline" of Professor Stubbs.

The dates of John's visits were, with one exception, supplied by Duffus Hardy's itinerary, in "Archæologia."

I have had no opportunity for making original research. All extracts are from such printed books as are accessible in the Nottingham Free Library, where, for the convenience of students, I intend to deposit a copy of this work with all authorities acknowledged in the margin.

As the evidence of the visits of monarchs is frequently to be found only in the testamentary clauses of the various documents issued on the occasion, and as such documents are, in cases, of some importance to history, brief notes or abstracts of such as have been met with are included, for the sake of their local connection.

Though in this little work I have preferred to condense passages rather than omit the most inconsiderate items that have come under notice, yet it is likely I have overlooked matters which should have been included. For this and other deficiencies some palliation, I venture to hope, will be found in the circumstance that the work was conceived and commenced before the writer

attained his majority—being completed at odd hours and amid difficulties—while it will be in the hands of the reader within less than a year after that event.

A. STAPLETON.

15, *Carlton Road,*
Nottingham,
November, 1890.

ERRATA.

1088, page 7.—Roger de Busli's gift of tithe to Blythe Priory, according to Thoroton, refers to the village of the same name in South Notts.—also owned by De Busli. In the grant, the name is spelt in the same way as both occur in Domesday Book. In the latter record, also, by a curious coincidence, the two places are mentioned as of equal value both before and after the Conquest. Doubtless, however, Thoroton is right, for the reference in the grant occurs among other villages in that neighbourhood.

11th. Henry II., page 11.—The passage referring to this date should be under 11th, Henry III.

1290, page 35.—Several slight printer's errors have been noticed, but it has only been deemed necessary to correct the one on this page, where 160 should be 16d.

HISTORY OF KINGS' CLIPSTONE.

CHAPTER I.

*From the earliest period to the end of the Norman
Line, A.D. 1154.*

Some, possibly, would consider an apology necessary from the author, on account of the insignificance of the subject for a history—the most obscure of hamlets, without church or monastery, and only noticeable for the Kings' House, the remains of which are not of sufficient interest even to be included in the routine tour of the Dukeries, nor yet, pictorially, in any published series of local views or photographs that I have seen. I am of opinion, however, that none is needed for chronicling the annals of a spot deemed worthy of entertaining at least half-a-dozen English monarchs and one Scottish king, with abundance of nobility, which has been associated with quite a remarkable succession of noble lords, and which has been the scene of an English Parliament.

In this work I have discarded the many old variations met with in the orthography of Clipstone and Kings' Clipstone in favour of the modern style. No object would be served by their retention, and the copying and re-copying of so many occurrences would most likely result in numerous errors. The present style of spelling with a final 'e,' I may mention, is a comparatively recent innovation, and some able authorities do not follow it. Certainly the latter syllable is

properly 'ton,' not 'stone,' as evinced by numerous instances, from the time of Domesday, in the earliest of which it appears as "tune," the ancient equivalent. The circumstance that there are other Clipstones, including another in our own shire, is sufficient to account for its distinctive prefix or affix.

The origin or derivation of the name I must leave to those better versed in philology, as unlearned conjectures are worse than useless. I may mention, however, that the earliest forms of the word—Clippestune in Domesday Book, and Clipestone, Clippeston, Clipiston, &c., until 1495, and probably later—shows that the first portion of the word was originally two syllables, and in another English occurrence of this name it has been said that this was derived from a Saxon personal name.

The origin or remote history of the village before the Conquest should next claim attention, as also the question whether it or the 'Palace' first sprang into existence. As there is every reason to believe that Sherwood is a primeval forest, it is not unlikely that the first settlers here, before the time of Forest Laws—whether during the Saxon or an earlier period—chose this site in its depths on account of its attractiveness and natural wealth in the shape of abundance of fish, flesh, fowl, wood, and pasture. The Manor House may have been built after such settlement, or if built first the cluster of huts, as predecessors of the village, perhaps grew around it as a shelter for retainers or dependants. The reasons for the erection of the House are doubtless to be looked for in the pleasures of the chase. On these points, however, it is vain to search for historical evidence. I have found no reference to Clipstone earlier than

that period at which most parish histories begin, viz., the time of the Domesday Survey, a little over eight hundred years ago.

Doubtless many readers have come across the statement that the House is said to have been founded by one of the early kings of Northumbria. Such reports appear to have had their origin in the following passage from Laird's *Nottinghamshire*, 1813, taken from a Harlein manuscript, the veracity of which we have no means of determining:—"The water of Man descendeth northward from the town of Mansfield through the forest and through Clipstone Park, and so by the town of Clipstone, where was an ancient house of the princes of this realm, but (built?) before the Conquest by the king of Northumberland."

There is another point to which we may look for indirect evidence. There is now every reason to believe that the battle of Hatfield, A.D. 633, took place, not as has generally been supposed at Hatfield, near Doncaster, Yorkshire, but at or near Hatfield in this neighbourhood, a short distance from Edwinstowe. (An article on this question, it may be added, appeared in the *Nottinghamshire Guardian* of 13th July, 1889.) The conflict was between Edwin first king of Northumbria, and Penda King of Mercia with Caadwalla king of Wales. Edwin was slain, and his body, though afterwards removed to Whitby, was probably buried at the place which bears his name—it is said on the site now covered by the church. If Clipstone was then, as in later days and now, comprised in Edwinstowe, and a royal residence existed, possibly it was here that he was interred. There is nothing more than theory to support this idea, yet a degree of presumptive evidence appears in the circumstance that the

chapel within the Manor House was dedicated to St. Edwin.

Thus the possibility, if not the probability, yet remains of the early existence of a royal residence, and though history says nothing on that score, her silence must not be considered conclusive, for the recorded history of these times is of the scantiest. I should not omit to say that there is no mention in Domesday of possessions of the late Saxon king here; which record, however, fails to mention Nottingham Castle.

If a residence or Saxon hall stood on this historic site before the Conquest, it is unlikely that it would be in any way similar to the castle-like structure, which doubtless it was in later days. For castles, except in connection with town defences, seem to have been unknown among the Saxons. On each of the two divisions, or manors, comprised in the place before the Conquest, probably stood a hall or manor-house of some kind, as a residence. Possibly the first building after the Conquest simply superseded one of these.

1086.—Coming to the time immediately after the Norman Conquest we, for the first time, tread on the solid ground of recorded and incontrovertible history. This is what Domesday Book tells us:—

“Osbern and Ulsi had two manors in Clipstone, which paid the Geld for one caracute. The land was two caracutes. After the Conquest Roger de Busli had in demesne one caracute and a half, and twelve villeins and three borders, having three caracutes and a half, and one mill of three shillings. Wood, by places pasturable, one leuca long and one broad. In the Confessor’s time the

value was sixty shillings, but forty shillings at the time of the Survey."

The above is of great interest as showing the state of the place over eight hundred years ago, and is a fair example of the character of the information afforded by this incomparable work. As the old words and phrases, however, will not be understood by the general reader, a little time spent in simplifying them will not be wasted.

Domesday Book was commenced about the year 1084 and completed in 1086, by order of William the Conqueror. Its purpose was that the King might know, from the amount of land, &c., possessed by his subjects, the exact amount due to him in the way of tax, and so it was to protect both himself and his subjects. Osbern and Ulsi were the two Saxons who held the place before the Conquest, when surnames were unusual. As was commonly the case, with few exceptions, they were doubtless dispossessed of their land by the Conqueror, which was then granted to Roger de Busli. The land they had held under cultivation was two caracutes—a caracute being a rough computation, and signifying as much as might be ploughed by a single team during the year. However, they only paid the Geld for one caracute. This system of underpayment, on whatever account it was allowed, was very widespread. The Geld was a land tax of two shillings yearly on each hide of land—another measure which varied very greatly, being in some counties equal to 240 or 250 acres, and in others much under that amount; doubtless it depended much on the productiveness or otherwise of the soil. De Busli, at the time of the survey, had only one and a half caracutes for himself, but his men must have been extraordinarily industrious, having more than

double that amount, which doubtless they had for the most part reclaimed from the forest, unless we are to suppose the apparent increase was but a result of the increased vigilance of the Norman inspection. Both the number of his men and the amount of land was considerably in excess of the same in nearly all surrounding villages. His villiens and borders were the two classes of bondmen, or farm-slaves, born upon and transferable with the estates. The former, always set down first as the superior class, were allowed to hold land in their own right. The borders, bondmen of the lowest rank, held a cottage at their lord's pleasure, and beyond this appear only to have been allowed their diet in return for their labour, whence it is said arose the word boarder. Besides the land De Busli's bondmen held a mill—doubtless a water-mill on the Maun—worth three shillings yearly, as also a wood, in parts of which were pasture land, of the length and breadth of one leuca—a measure of fifteen hundred paces. The value of the place, in spite of the great additions apparently made to the cultivated land, had, as in most other places, deteriorated in value to two-thirds of what it was in the time of Edward the Confessor—in other words before the Conquest, the reign of the last Saxon king, Harold, being by William ignored as a usurper.

Roger de Busli, and his name probably originated from Busli or Builli near Rouen, France. He was a man of high birth and lineage, being related to Roger de Montgomery who accompanied the King on his expedition into England, and was by the King created Earl of Shrewsbury and Arundel, for Robert, his son and heir, claimed and received from Rufus the possessions of De Busli as his kinsman. Montgomery himself was related

to the Conqueror. De Busli was also, in a degree, related to Odo Bishop of Baieux, Robert Earl of Mortain, Alan Earl of Brittany, afterwards Earl of Richmond, and William Earl of Warren and Surrey. His possessions, forming what was for centuries afterwards known as the Honour of Tickhill, extended over this and the four adjoining counties, comprising in all sixty knights' fees and three-fourths. These fees, it may be mentioned, have been variously estimated at 680—800 acres, or of the annual value of £20. Doubtless they were variable in acreage, much depending on the character of the soil, but were held by custom to be as much as would support a knight, so that he might render service as such to the king. De Busli, like other large landowners, divided his estates into two portions. The greater portion he parcelled out into knights' fees and bestowed on other Normans of high family, who, in return, rendered him feudal allegiance. The other and much smaller division, comprising Clipstone and land in some eighteen other places in Notts., he retained in demesne.

1088.—This year Roger and his wife Muriel gave and granted to God and St. Mary of Blythe, and the monks there serving God, a great number of lands, &c., in their different manors, among which occurs in Clipstone the tithe of one caracute. It would be interesting to learn whether this title was charged on land of his demesne or on that of his bondmen. Probably the tithe ceased to be acknowledged or paid after the whole Manor had become royal property, for we find no further allusion to it, and it is not mentioned among the possessions of the priory, either in the Inquisition of 1379 or in the *Valor* of Henry VIII.

Roger was dead in 1098 (Thoroton says he died 4 Ides January 1099), leaving a son who died without issue in 1102, as also a brother Arnaldus and a sister Beatrix. Each of these produced a line of illustrious descendants, on whom, however, there is no necessity to elaborate, for in some unexplained manner, Clipstone became separated from the Honour at a very early date. In what way this came to pass it now seems impossible to ascertain. It has been said that De Busli's possessions, that is the Honour of Tickhill, escheated or reverted for lack of heirs to the Crown. If this is the truth—and it is clear that Rufus held it—the conclusion seems natural that it would take place on the death of his childless son in 1102. This, however, cannot be, and we are driven to the belief that the escheat took place on the death of Roger himself—his son, for some reason, not being allowed to inherit. For Robert de Belesme, Earl of Shrewsbury and Arundel, obtained possession of the Honour in the reign of Rufus, which terminated in 1100. The King exacted a large sum when the Earl assumed those possessions, and we can only conclude that the Monarch chose to retain Clipstone. His known fondness for the chase—at which he met his death—may have suggested that proceeding.

1130-31.—In the foregoing interval of forty-two years, I have found no local reference. The date of the present note is open to doubt, being taken from the earliest Pipe Roll, which among antiquaries has been a subject for dispute. Old writers, including Thoroton, and others down to the present day, have ascribed it to the fifth year of King Stephen, 1140. Prynne locates it in 18,

Henry II., while the more modern and experienced Hunter, its only editor, settles it in 31, Henry I. the precedent I have followed.

We learn from it that Jordan Fitzalan (or son of Alan), who owed 100 shillings of the ferm of the past year—either he or his father, the said Alan—rendered, or paid, an account of 100 shillings of the ferm of the Manors of Clipstone, but Osbert Sylvan, then Sheriff, was to pay it for him.

This information, though not extensive, is of some importance. We learn from it that at this early date Clipstone was the King's demesne. It is also interesting to know—which seems to convey the impression that it had not long been royal property—that the old Saxon divisions of the place, separated perhaps by the Maun, were yet maintained, though ever after this occasion we find the place alluded to as one manor.

Ferm, also spelt firm and farm, means the yearly rent of lands, &c.; in later days coming to mean the land itself, hence our modern word farm. The towns, boroughs, villates, manors and lands of the King, from an early date after the Conquest, were wont to be let out on ferm to such persons, and on such terms, as the King accepted. In later times it became the custom to let out in fee-ferm, or at a fixed and unalterable sum, the towns and boroughs to the men and burgesses of the same.

No further light is thrown on the history of Clipstone during the rest of the period of the Norman line, nor indeed until the eleventh year of the first Plantagenet monarch.

CHAPTER II.

Henry the Second and Richard the First.

1154—1199.

We now come to the commencement of the period during which Clipstone may be said to have been in its glory as a royal residence or lodging,—during the Plantagenet dynasty, nearly, probably not quite, all of which line of monarchs visited it. Some writers have indignantly repudiated the alleged statement in other works,—which works I have failed to observe,—that this was merely a royal “hunting-box.” So far as my observations go, however, I think this term is more suitable than that of “palace.”

Henceforth, during upwards of two centuries, these notes are taken in great measure from records which are dated only with the year of the monarch’s reign. Such years, of course, comprised parts of two Dominical years, so that the necessary substitution of the ordinary for the regnal year, in quoting from these documents, involves the use of two dates. This is unavoidable, for to commute for any single year is impossible, and the attempt to do so has given rise to considerable confusion in Bailey’s *Annals of Nottinghamshire*. To enable the inexperienced reader to include these double dates within the space of one ordinary year, the dates of the commencement of regnal years will be given in their places so far as is requisite. The year of Henry II. commenced with 19th December, ending of course with 18th December in the year following.

1164-5.—During the period which elapsed between the dates of the last note and the following it appears possible that Clipstone had left the Crown. For in the Pipe Rolls of the reign of

Henry II.,—the only rolls of the period,—we find no reference to the place until the eleventh regnal year, as above. This circumstance, however, perhaps only signifies that it had not been let to ferm. But now it was finally royal property. Perhaps, judging from the notes for this year and the following, the King's House, as the "palace" was called,—now for the first time mentioned,—had been in a neglected and ruinous condition, or perhaps was being erected or re-erected. It would scarcely be justifiable to hazard a conjecture that a fortified house or castle had stood here and been occupied by one of the barons of the previous reign, meeting its fate by the edict of destruction of Henry II., which sealed the doom of numbers of troublesome petty fortresses. It is likely, however, that the fifteen years of war, tyranny, and terrorism, which caused the cultivated land to be deserted at the latter end of Stephen's reign, may be responsible for the lack of revenue from this place, from which the recovery appears to have been gradual.

This year, for a tun of wine for the King, and its conduct from London to Clipstone, and thence to Nottingham, was paid £4 12s. 6d., perhaps in connection with a royal visit. In works upon the Kings' House at Clipstone £20, by the King's writ. And for a fourth of the year, while Robert fitz Ranulph held office, £13 8s. 6d.

Thoroton records that the custody of the Forest came to the Everinghams shortly after the above year, in whose hands it continued until the time of Edward I. The Forest was then said to be in three divisions or keepings, the first being the portion between the Leen and the Doverbeck, the second High Forest, the third Rumwood. In the second keeping Robert Everingham was to have

two Foresters riding, with two Pages and two Foresters on foot, also two Verderers and two Agisters. In this keeping were two hays: Birkland and Bilhagh, and the Park of Clipstone, in which hays and Park were two Verderers and two Agisters. However, this must refer to a later period, when Clipstone Park was constructed, as will be seen.

1165-6.—This year the Sheriff, Robert fitz Ralph, rendered an account of 44 shillings (amount deleted) of the ferm of Clipstone. In stocking the same Manor—for six oxen 18s., ten cows 20s., ten sows 6s. 8d., ten bee-hives 6s. 8d., twelve sheep 4s.

The word manor seems to have been frequently applied, without discrimination, to both the Kings' House and the whole area of the township, though the latter is correct, the word at this period signifying an estate of which part is in demesne and part held by tenants, over whom the lord had jurisdiction at periodical courts. It was one of the duties of the sheriff, it may be added, to attend to the stocking and re-stocking of the royal manors.

1166-7.—The Sheriff rendered an account of 100s. of the ferm of Clipstone, which was paid into the Treasury.

1168-9.—Towards the Aid,—a feudal tax or subsidy,—this year levied for marrying the King's daughter, to which Mansfield paid 20 marks and Edwinstowe 3 marks, Clipstone contributed 1 mark. It is not quite certain in what ratio this Aid was imposed, but in the following reign another one was paid by the King's tenants in chief,—those who held directly of him,—at the rate of twenty shillings per knight's fee.

1170-1.—Expended on works at Clipstone this year 46s. 8d.

1171-2.—For enclosing the Hays around the Kings' House at Clipstone 20s., by the view of Ralph de Wellebeuf and William fil Rein. In operations upon the Kings' House 43s., by the view of Thomas de London and William fil Rein. Account rendered of 3s. 4d. for honey at the Hays of Clipstone.

This is the earliest reference to the Hays. The word itself means a hedge, but here it signifies an enclosure,—always occurring in the plural. The number however is not mentioned, but there were probably two, perhaps one within the other with a view to defence. The hays of Sherwood Forest were enclosures in which no man could claim commonage.

The phrase "by view" requires a little explanation. When the sheriff of a county executed, by order, any work for the King, the amount expended was set down to his credit, to be settled for at the end of the official year. But, to save the King from being overcharged or defrauded, "viewers" were appointed to oversee the work. The number of these is not often mentioned,—though they are specially set down as four in 1214; it probably varied, perhaps in proportion to the magnitude of the work. These were mostly agents of the Crown, royal taskers, purveyors and the like,—at times local jurats,—who were afterwards examined before the Barons of the Exchequer on their oaths, before the Sheriff was finally credited to the amount expended.

1173-4.—William fitz Ranulph, Sheriff, this year gave account of the Assize of the King's Demesnes, and among the rest Clipstone 32s. 8d. Assize has many meanings, and in the present case may mean either a tax or rent,—probably the former.

1174.—This year, 30th September, saw peace made between the King and his rebellious sons. We are only interested in the conditions and concessions of this agreement in so far as they relate to Prince John. The provision for him included one thousand librates (pounds) of rents in England, of the King's demesnes and escheats, the Castle of Nottingham with the county of the same, the Castle of Marlborough, and lands, &c., in France. It seems that the gift of Nottinghamshire, however, must have meant only the revenues, for the expenditure at Clipstone continued to be set down year by year, as before, in the royal accounts.

1176-7.—Expended at Clifton, with the vivarium (fish-pond), £210. This may be a mistake for Clipstone, judging by subsequent references. The outlay was an enormous one.

1177-8.—Operations upon the vivarium of Clipstone £20; the chapel £20; the House £36 6s. 8d. This fish-pond may or may not have been the mill-dam as in after years. This is the earliest reference to the chapel; such an expenditure conveys the impression that it must have been connected with the cost of building the structure.

1178-9.—Works at Clipstone and Nottingham £65; the park £10 12s. 6d.; the vivarium, &c., £126. Overseers, Henry Leech, Reginald de St. Maria, Adam de Mortain, and William fil Walkelin; and for horses and beasts employed for the King's use, by Hugo de St. Mauro, £4 15s. 3d. With reference to the above, it should be remembered that there was a park and vivarium at Nottingham. Possibly the last item has reference
a royal visit.

1179-80.—For inclosing the park at Clipstone £30; overseer William fil Walkelin. This is

important as the earliest certain reference to the Park, especially as it tells us the date of inclosure. Though not the first, as has been stated, it was yet *among* the first of English parks. Previous to this inclosure the men of Mansfield appear to have had common of pasture on the site, a privilege of which they were thus deprived, apparently without recompense.

1181.—The King was at Nottingham about August 1181, whence he probably journeyed north. A charter to the order of Lazarites, bearing date at Clipstone, very possibly belongs to this period. It is attested by Geoffry the King's son, Fulk Painei, Reginald de Curteneye, Robert de Stuteville, Ralph fitz Stephen, Bertram de Verdon, Michael Belet, and William de Bendinges.

1182-3.—For utensils in the King's House at Clipstone, by the King's writ, 36s. 6d.

1184-5.—In payment of Humphrey de Bussei, for guarding the King's House at Clipstone, 66s. (or 60s.); and Ranulph and Herbert, for keeping the Park there, 4s.

1185.—About February the King appears to have been at Clipstone. Of two charters there expedited one is to Thurgarton Priory, Notts., the other to Barling's Abbey, Lincolnshire. The testing clause of the latter, when corrected by the former, gives witnesses common to both, viz., Hugh, Bishop of Durham; William, Earl of Arundel; Ranulph de Glanvill; Bernard de St. Wallery; Roger de Stutevill; William de Stutevill; Hugh Bardolf, Dapifer; and Ranulph de Guddinges. This appears to be the only other recorded visit of Henry, but it is probable that he was here on other occasions, though the sparse records and chronicles of this reign afford but

general ideas of the royal progresses. He frequently traversed the neighbourhood in passing between the north and south of the kingdom, and in 1157, for instance, he spent a long period from September to December in Notts. and the Peak.

1185-6.—For inclosing the court of Clipstone 60s., by the view of Humphrey de Bussei and Tom de London.

1186-7.—For breaking up the vivarium at Clipstone 50s., and for carrying the fish from the same to another vivarium.

1189.—Richard I. was not crowned until about two months after the death of his father, viz., on the 3rd September, 1189. Before this, in the previous month of August, he exercised his generosity in making ample provision for his brother, Prince John. He gave him, among other vast possessions, the counties of Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, and the honours of Tickhill and Peveril, with the forests, vills, and all other appurtenances. In the first year of this reign, however, the local income and expenditure are still set down in the imperial accounts as follows:—

Ralph Murdac, Sheriff, renders an account of £4 of the ferm of Clipstone. The amount was disposed of in this way: Paid into the Treasury 16s.; in payment of Humphrey de Bussei 60s., for keeping the King's House of Clipstone; and Ranulph and Herbert, keepers of the Park, 4s.

Earl John, about this year, as Lord of Nottingham, granted a charter of liberties to that town, which, judging from the witnesses, was issued from this locality. The place is not given, and it would be too wild a proceeding to hazard the conjecture that it was from Clipstone. Among the more illustrious witnesses were Adam, Abbot of Wel-

beck; Alexander, Prior of Lenton; Aldred, Prior of Newstead; Ralph Murdac, Sheriff of Notts. and Derby; Geoffry de Jorz (of Burton Jorce); Sampson de Strelley, and Geoffry Luterall (Lord of Gamston).

1194.—It is a matter of history that when King Richard left England for the Holy Land, at the commencement of his reign, his treacherous brother John attempted to seize the crown and kingdom into his own hands, fortifying his own castles in furtherance of that design. When Richard returned in March, 1194, John retired to France, but left the castles strongly fortified. These, however, were in turn reduced by Richard to submission, the last to surrender being those of Tickhill and Nottingham. The latter at length fell into the hands of Richard before the end of March, the Monarch having conducted the siege personally and with characteristic vigour.

On the following day, 29th March—in the words of an early chronicler—Richard proceeded to view Clipstone and the Forest of Sherwood, which he had never before seen, and they pleased him much, and on the same day he returned to Nottingham.

A few days later—on 2nd April—the King again proceeded to Clipstone to meet William, King of Scotland there, ordering, in the meantime, that all who were lately taken in the castles of Nottingham, Tickhill, Marlborough, Lancaster, and Mount St. Michael, should be brought together at Winchester, on the morrow after Easter.

The following day, 3rd April, being Palm Sunday, the King remained at Clipstone on that account. The King of Scots spent the feast at Worksop, observing the day with solemnity.

The following day the two kings passed on to Southwell.

These visits of Richard, the last local reference I have found during the reign, are specially worthy of being remembered when we consider that, out of a reign of ten years, he spent barely eight months in England. The statement that has occurred in some local works, to the effect that the meeting of the kings took place at Clipstone-on-the-Wolds, scarcely requires correction.

Shortly afterwards John was proclaimed a traitor and incapable of succeeding to the throne, his lands being confiscated. At the end of May, however, a reconciliation took place between the brothers, and in March, 1195, Richard restored to John all he had held.

Small as is the scope of this little work, in treating of a spot situated in the depths of his reputed haunt, we are not allowed to pass over the romantic age of the first Richard without an allusion to Robin Hood. It has been recorded from tradition that it was near Clipstone that Coeur-de-lion himself, having become inadvertently separated from his followers, was surrounded by Robin Hood and his men. The outlaw, having revealed himself, stated that they were there to do homage to His Majesty, which so secured for him the goodwill of the Monarch that he thereupon invited Robin to Westminster—an invitation which was accepted. Unfortunately we cannot place much credence in such stories, though the fact of Richard's visits at least puts this one within the bounds of possibility. The late Spencer T. Hall, the "Sherwood Forester," in his *Forester's Offering*, records traditions actually current in the forest villages concerning the Outlaw, the most interesting of which he relates in verse,

under the title of *The Outlaws' Excursion to Clipstone*. The poem is lengthy and full of interest, though the author, evidently converted by Hunter's tract, places the incidents in the reign of Edward I. or II. It should be recorded that the real or supposed association of the outlaws with this spot is eternalised by the statues on the Duke's Archway—a short distance from the ruins—of Robin Hood, Little John, Maid Marian, King Richard, Friar Tuck, and Allan-a-dale. Some distance in another direction, also, is Robin Hood's Whetstone, a hill 366 feet in height, and it has been traditionally recorded that this Prince of Outlaws was married at the parish church, while sundry other associations might be mentioned relating to the parish in which Clipstone is but a hamlet.



CHAPTER III.

Period of King John and Henry III.

1199—1272.

We now come to the reign of that monarch—John—to whom the remains of the royal Manor seem to have been specially dedicated as “the ruins of King John’s Palace.” Some local writers have thought that he built it, a statement for which there is no foundation. They also tell us that this was a favourite residence of his, both before and after his accession to the throne. These, however, are but stretches of imagination, founded only on the name of the ruin and on the testamentary clause of his charter to Nottingham as King. As a matter of fact we have proof of five flying visits throughout his reign, and of none before his accession.

In one respect the regnal years of John differ from those of other English monarchs. He commenced to reign on Ascension Day, 27th May, 1199, and, instead of each of the following regnal years commencing on 27th May, he caused them to be controlled by the advent of Ascension Day which, as a movable feast, fluctuated during his reign over the space of one month, viz., from 3rd May to 3rd June.

1200.—John’s first visit to Clipstone as King took place in the first year of his reign. He was here on 19th March, 1200, and dated hence his charter to Nottingham, confirming grants made by him while Earl of Mortain. The following list of witnesses was appended thereto, and will be of interest as recording some few of the in-

fluent nobles in his company :—"Geoffrey Fitz-Peter Earl of Essex, Willam Brewer, Hugh Bardolf, Robert Fitz-Roger, William de Stuteville, Hugh de Neville, Simon de Pateshull, Gilbert de Norfolk. Given by the hands of Simon, Archdeacon of Wells, and John de Gray, Achdeacon of Cleveland, at Clipstone, the 19th day of March, in the first year of our reign."

During this same regnal year, in 1200, the men of Mansfield, commendably anxious to recover a lost right, offered the King fifteen marks for having Common of Pasture in the Park of Clipstone, as they were wont to have in the time of King Henry (II.) father of that King (John) before it was inclosed to make a park. At this time all favours, however just, requested of the King had to be accompanied by presents. Fifteen marks—a mark being two-thirds of a pound, 13s. 4d.—amounted to £10, a large sum in those days. For money had then about fifteen times the purchasing power it has at the present day, which would make the amount equal to £150. Probably they found themselves unable to subscribe this amount for the privilege, which consequently lapsed, for the following year the sheriff reported that the amount was unpaid, and we hear no more of it.

1201.—The King again called at Clipstone this year, on 6th March, in which month four out of five of his recorded visits took place. We have, doubtless, a reference to this visit in the account of William Brewer, Sheriff, this year, in which occurs the cost of carrying the King's bacons from Clipstone to Northampton, 10s. 10d., and to the Chaplain of Clipstone 20s. of his livery, from the Sunday next before the feast of St. Nicholas (St. Nic. 6th Dec.) until the Sunday next before

the feast of the Ascension (Ascen. 18th May in year 2) by the King's writ, and likewise 20s. to him from that time till St. Michael (St. Mich. 29th September.)

1204.—At the latter end of this year, on 26th December, while at Tewkesbury, the King sent to the Sheriff of Notts., ordering him to procure out of his ferm,—the county ferm,—so much as was necessary for the repair of the Houses of Clipstone, by view, &c., the amount to be computed to him, &c. The plural, Houses, is constantly used in writs of this character, and itself conveys an impression of what the place was probably like—a collection of buildings for every purpose, perhaps added to a central or main structure as occasion arose, without fixed design; and at a short distance, within the Hays, the necessary buildings and outhouses of a mediæval farm with houses or huts for the men.

1204-5.—In the lists of lands of the Normans granted for this year, occurs to Richard de Lessington the Manor of Lessington or Lexington, and for Geoffry de Gors—probably he of 1189—the Vill of Clipstone, in the county of Nottingham.

1205.—The King paid his third visit this year on 11th March. It was doubtless on this occasion, and for the royal table, that the Sheriff conveyed wine here. For on 28th September following the King, while at Nottingham, directed his writ to the Barons of his Exchequer, ordering them to reckon with that official for that which he had expended in carriage of wine from Nottingham to eleven places, including two tuns to Clipstone.

1206.—The King on 10th March, while at Nottingham, directed the Barons of his Exchequer

to reckon with the Sheriff for what he had expended—by the King's command and by view and testimony of legal men—in repairing the Houses of Clipstone.

1207.—The King on 23rd May, being at Doncaster, directed his writ to Geoffry de Jorce, commanding him to release to Philip Minekan, or Munekan, the Houses of Clipstone, with the Hays, and the custody thereof, as also twenty librates of land, or land of the annual value of twenty pounds, which were formerly Ivon de Fontibus', but which were afterwards committed to him and Richard de Lexington. (The two latter are mentioned as Foresters two years earlier.) The said Philip was to have only 100s. to sustain him in the King's service, and was to answer to the King concerning the residue and concerning the Vill of Clipstone. The average extent of a librate of land, it may be added, was four bovates or oxgangs.

On 28th July following, the King, while at Burton, sent intimation to Brian de Insula that he had commanded John fil Jordan, of Boston, to liberate unto him, or to a certain messenger, sixteen dolia or casks of the King's wines which were in his custody, to wit, twelve dolia of wine of Wascon' and four of Muisac'. Of these the said Brian was to convey three tuns of wine of Wascon' and one of Mussac' to Clipstone, and more to Scrooby, Lexington, and elsewhere. A dolium of wine contained fifty-two sextaries, each sextary consisting of four gallons.

On 12th October following, from Marlborough, the King commanded his Barons of the Exchequer to settle with the creditor for fifteen dolia of wine, bought at need or occasion, and of which he had caused four dolia to be sent to Harestan and

three to Clipstone,—others to Lexington, Southwell, Newark, Gringley, &c.

The King at the end of the year, on 27th December, being at Windsor, sent to the Sheriff of Notts., commanding him to allow to Philip Munekan money from the county ferm for the reparation of the Houses and Dam of Clipstone, which were in the custody of the said Philip.

1210.—It is an unfortunate circumstance that the series of rolls from which many of these notes are taken, and by which the whereabouts of the King at almost any date may be discovered, are broken at this interesting period by the loss of those for the period of four regnal years—1208—1212. Another kind of roll, however, for one year, the twelvth, 1210—11, is fortunately preserved, by which happily we are enabled to record another royal visit here. John was at Nottingham in November, 1210, for several days and until Tuesday in the feast of St. Andrew, which latter day is 30th November. On the Thursday following he was at Clipstone, whence he advanced half-a-mark to Thomas Fletcher *de prestito*, or by way of imprest, which however appears to be deleted. He also advanced twelve shillings, on the same day and in a similar way, to Robert de Percy and John de Winterburn for the expenses of the soldiers in Ireland. It is uncertain on what day the King left Clipstone, but he spent the following Sunday and Monday at Lexington.

1212.—This is the year by which, perhaps, Clipstone is best remembered by most of us. The well-known historical story of the execution of the Welsh hostages by King John in 1212 is commonly understood, as evinced by scores of local works, to have had its inception here. The story goes that John, while hunting near Clipstone

where he was staying, received tidings of a revolt against him among the Welsh, and also, directly afterwards, another communication apprising him of a conspiracy against him in the northern parts of England. Hastily summoning a council around him of the distinguished individuals in his company, they gathered under a tree thenceforth called the Parliament Oak. The King informed them of the nature of the communications, and, in a passion, demanded and received their consent to the execution of twenty-eight Welsh hostages then confined in Nottingham Castle, whose lives he appears to have considered forfeited. He then mounted his horse, and, followed by his company, rode with all speed to Nottingham where, by his orders, the whole number—their youth being ignored—were suspended in a row from the ramparts. John then, without delay, returned to Clipstone to dine and to resume his diversions.

Whatever may be the truth about this alleged deed of John's, I am afraid the idea of its connection, in any way, with Clipstone must be relinquished. None of the chroniclers, so far as I can find, record such a detail. Rapin, the authority sometimes given, does not connect the story with Clipstone. In short it seems more than probable that some local writer has connected the so-called King John's Palace and Parliament Oak with the incident of the executions, as a likely way of localising the episode. It cannot be definitely stated that the story so originated, but I have been unable to trace it further back than the first Notts. directory, 1830. Still Major Rooke, it should be added, in his pamphlet on Sherwood Forest 1799, says the Oak is so called "from a traditional account of a parliament or

meeting having been held under it in the time of King John or probably Edward I," It is not pleasant, though expedient, to blot out local legends, and it is to be regretted that it cannot be finally decided whether King John was here in 1212, before 4th May or not, though it is certain he was not here after that date. It may be added that he was at Nottingham 6th to 9th July inclusive, again 14th to 21st August, and again on 10th September.

1214.—On the 8th August Robert de Lexington, during the King's absence in France, was commanded by a deputy to cause what was needed to be done for the repair of the Lord King's Houses of Clipstone, by view of four lawful men,—whatever was so expended to be accounted to him at the Exchequer.

1215.—The King, on the 11th January, while at the New Temple, London, commanded the Sheriff to provide payment for the two chaplains at Clipstone and Harestan, there ministering, by his command, for the soul of King Henry, his father. This note is of interest as the first intimation of the Chantry here, founded apparently by John.

While the King was at Litchfield, on the 2nd April, he directed his writ to the Barons of his Exchequer, ordering them to reckon with Brian de Insula for that which Philip Monekan, sometime Keeper of his Houses of Clipstone, had by command expended. The same Brian was also to be settled with for what he had expended while himself held that custody, after the said Philip had been deposed. The different styles of spelling the late Custodian's name are but accountable variations of one word, well known as a surname in its modern form. The Anglo-Saxon 'mynecen,'

the feminine of 'munuc,' are equivalent to the Latin 'monachus,' monk.

In the March following King John paid his last visit to Clipstone. He was here on the 26th and 27th; the 28th he was at Kingshagh; and on the 29th he was again at Clipstone. The latter date,—evidently a mere coincidence,—was the anniversary of the first visit of King Richard twenty-one years before, when Cœur-de-Lion was "much pleased" therewith. It is improbable but not impossible that John, being informed of the circumstance and perhaps already experiencing declining health, returned from Kingshagh to pass the day at Clipstone out of respect for his brother's memory.

1216.—The King on the 25th February, while at Lincoln, issued writs to numerous constables, including one to the Constable of Clipstone, commanding them not to take the revenues of the lands or fees, in their respective bailiwicks, which were in the custody of William Brewer—that which had already been taken to be without delay rendered. This, if it is not another name for the Custodian or Keeper, is the only reference to such an official. It would be a decided acquisition if we could print, what a thorough search through the public records could alone supply, viz. : a list of all Chaplains, Keepers, Constables, and other officials of Clipstone, to which odd references will be found in divers places.

King John died in Newark Castle on the 19th October following. A statement for which there is no foundation, probably promulgated by one of those who revel in making Clipstone his favourite residence, says that he was then journeying hither.

Henry III. was crowned 28th October, 1216, on which date his regnal years commence.

1220.—Henry, on the 23rd November, while at Winchester, directed the Barons of his Exchequer to reckon with Philip Mark, Sheriff, for seven pounds and eightpence, spent by him in reparation of the great Dam and Mill of Clipstone, and in repairing the Pale about the King's Houses there. Mr. Yeatman gives this amount, from the Sheriff's account, as £7 6s. 8d.

1221.—The King, on the 15th June, being at Blythe, directed the following writ to Brian de Insula: You are commanded to take with you a Verderer of the bailiwick of Clipstone and go to Clipstone to view the burnt houses of our poor men there; and allow the same men a reasonable allowance of building-wood to rebuild their houses, where there is a sufficiency of this,—at the least detriment to our Forest.

The above is an item of special interest. This, no doubt, is to what Thoroton refers when he says that Clipstone was burned it seems and repaired again before 5th. Henry III., 1220-1. He, however, is not quite right in setting the incident down as having happened *before* that year. These notes suffice to show that it took place during the year. Throsby, in his edition of—*alias* additions to—Thoroton, naturally wonders whether it was the 'palace' or the village that was burnt. We learn from the above that the houses of the King's "poor men," as he compassionately terms them—which at that time probably represented the village—were destroyed. But we have reason to believe that the Manor House was also destroyed in some measure. It seems, indeed, not unlikely that a large conflagration, such as would be involved in the case of the latter, perhaps spread to the outbuildings,—at least rather than the reverse. Until the "men"—doubtless feudatory tenants

who claimed only to be tried at the court of their lord—had erected new huts they would probably have no roof to sleep under. The King seems to have recognised the urgency of their case for, on the 23rd June, only eight days after the above writ, while at Nottingham, he dispatched another to the same which only differed from the preceding in enjoining that the provision of the wood should be at the least detriment to the Forest *above all*.

1223.—The King, while at Westminster on the 7th February, wrote commanding the Sheriff of Notts., without delay, to make reparation of the King's chamber of Clipstone,—the cost so incurred, by view and testimony of legal men, to be computed to him at the Exchequer.

At the same time and place another writ was directed to Brian de Insula, commanding him to allow the Sheriff to have, for the purpose, building-wood from the Forest of Sherwood, whence it might be best procured. Whether the need for repairing the King's chamber was occasioned by the fire two years previously is uncertain. Probably it was; the reason that its repair had not been ordered earlier was because no likelihood of the monarch using it had appeared. Indeed, though the above mandate—which was repeated three months later, 6th May—seems to imply an intended visit on the part of his Majesty, none such took place. After searching a large number of records relating to this period I have been unable to discover that Henry, during his long reign of fifty-six years, ever visited Clipstone. If this is so—a matter for some surprise—he differed from both his three predecessors and his three successors. So in this respect he stands alone in his line with Richard II., the last of the Plantagenets.

1225.—On the 12th November Hugh de Nevill was commanded to allow Brian de Insula to have—apparently for the second time—full seisen, or possession, of the Lord the King's Houses of Clipstone, with the Park, Hays, &c., and their appurtenances, which the King commits to his custody during pleasure.

1235-6.—The King, this year, committed the custody of the Honour of Peverel to Roger de Essex, and at the same time appointed him Custodian of the Manors of Kingshagh and Clipstone.

1246-7.—The King committed to Robert le Vavassur, Sheriff of Nottingham, the Manors of Derlington, Retford, Clipstone, and Ragenhall (Ragnall), to be kept by him so long as it should please the King.

1249-50.—The Sheriff of York commanded—by view of the Mayor, Bailiffs, and other upright men of the town of York—to sell the King's old wine at York. A similar command was issued, on the same occasion, to other Sheriffs including the Sheriff of Notts., who was commanded to sell the King's wines at Nottingham and Clipstone. This was a not uncommon precept, and is curious as showing the natural preference for freshness in wines as in other foods at the time, the modern enthusiasm over old vintages having not yet developed.

1255-6.—The Sheriff was commanded, without delay, to seize into the King's hands the Manors of Clipstone in Sherwood and Melbourne, Derbyshire, which the King committed to Robert le Vavassour, sometime Sheriff of Notts. and Derby.

At the same time Roger Lovetot was appointed Custodian of the same manors, during the King's pleasure.

1265-6.—In payment of Walter, Chaplain in the Chapel of Birchland, 40s., and two chaplains at Clipstone, 100s.—from the Sheriff's account. This is the first and only occasion on which two chaplains are mentioned, so perhaps it is an error.



CHAPTER IV.

*The Edwardian Period, and end of the Plantagenet
Line, Part I.*

1272—1399.

With the accession of the first of the three Edwards, who commenced to reign 20th November, 1272, commences the Edwardian period. During this era alone, more especially in the time of the second of these monarchs, can the Kings' House with any approach to truth be described as a Royal Palace.

The rarity of the visits of Edward I., as here recorded, is more probably due to lack of access to proper works than to their fewness. A document from which all such might be transcribed is the complete itinerary of that King, prepared many years ago for the use of the Record Commissioners.

1280.—Raine, the Blythe historian, records that during the first five days of August, 1280, the writs of Edward are dated either in Sherwood Forest or at Clipstone.

1290.—The King, in the autumn of 1290, with a design of proceeding to the borders of Scotland, summoned the Parliament to meet him at Clipstone on 27th October. This was done, possibly, with the idea of thus being nearer Scotland than would have been the case had he called the Parliament together in London. Yet it does not appear that he was over anxious to press in that direction, for during the year he was never more than a day's journey further north than Clipstone.

At the beginning of September he was at Geddington and Rockingham; on the 11th he was at

Hardby, in this county, where, in the following month, his consort Queen Eleanor died. From 13th to 17th he was at Newstead Priory; on the 18th and 19th at Rufford Abbey. On the 20th he was at his own house at Clipstone, which, however, he left on the morning of the 23rd for Dronfield. He remained in Derbyshire until 7th October, when setting out again for Clipstone, he arrived on the 12th and remained.

On 13th October he issued an order for payment of 200 marks from his treasury to Lopus de Pistoria and his associates, merchants of Pistoria.

Edward also issued hence, during this regnal year, and doubtless, if we could ascertain, about the same date, an order for payment of 3,000 marks from his treasury to Lopus Bonchi and Gradus Pini, of Pistoria. A much larger sum was ordered to be paid the following year, as mentioned below, which probably was also on the occasion of the present visit, which covered the commencement of the next regnal year.

On the 14th October, writing hence, the King protests that he intends to go to the Holy Land, and accepts the tenths granted for that object.

The King issued another writ hence dated on Monday next after the feast of St. Luke the Evangelist, which feast is on 18th October.

On 23rd October he issued a writ for the payment of the annual fee of Francis Accursius.

The following note concerning a certain Elias de Hanville and his one servant, taken from the royal accounts, is interesting if only as recording the rate of wages at this period. "To the same for the wages of one man and the expenses of one horse, bringing the jewels which came out of the wardrobe, from Newcastle-upon-Tyne into Scotland, and returning with them from Scotland to

Clipstone, from the 21st day of September to the last day of October—for 31 days—receiving per day 2d. for the man aforesaid, and for the horse 3d.—12s. 11d.”

The Parliament was opened on St. Michael's Day, November; and the 251 pleas, with the petitions, then presented “before the Lord King,” with the answers, cover twenty-one of the large folio pages of the printed Rolls—the roll for this occasion occurring as third in the work. This—decidedly an event of the first importance in Clipstone's history, when probably a larger number of the nobility and great men of the kingdom were assembled than at any other time—the Parliament Oak was in all likelihood intended to commemorate. Whether the tree was planted in memory of the event, or what was the special connection, if any, between them, it is now impossible to say. The theory that the great national assembly was held around this tree, which careless writers continue to perpetuate, is almost too puerile to require correction.

Edward remained here until 11th November, and possibly one or two days later, but it is certain that he had left on the 14th. He was several days at Lexington, whence he removed to Marnham, and on the 20th he was again at Hardby. He was there up to the 28th, on which day the Queen breathed her last. She died of a lingering disease—a slow fever—and from this we can understand why the quietness and seclusion of Hardby should be chosen for her in preference to the presence of the King at Clipstone, where the Court and Parliament were to be held. The foregoing remarks, it should be added, refute the statement of certain of the chroniclers who aver

that Edward was called from the borders of Scotland to the death-bed of his Queen.

1290-1.—The King issued from Clipstone, this year, an order for payment of £10,000 to two merchants of the Ricardi of Lucca, in part payment of a loan. The loan itself, whatever the full amount, must at that period have represented an enormous sum, such indeed as only a king would have been justified in contracting.

1290.—In an "Account of the receipts of the lands in Tynedale and Cumberland lately held by Alexander III. (of Scotland), with a statement of how the money has been applied," we find that, besides a large sum expended at Lexington, £25 and 160 was spent in repairs on the Houses, Dams, and Weir of the Manor of Clipstone.

1299.—This year the King, an accredited messenger being sent, viz., his treasurer the Bishop of Chester, wrote to the Queen and his son inviting them to keep the solemnity of the birth of our Lord at his Manor of Clipstone, near Sherwood. The Queen replied that she preferred to spend the holiday at St. Albans. However, upon consultation, the King kept his Christmas at Windsor, with his son and all his family. This unfortunate perverseness of Her Majesty has deprived us of an item of interest in local history. However, as this has been the scene of one royal celebration of Christmas, in the next reign, we must rest content.

Edward II., who commenced to reign 8th July, 1307, appears to have been really fond of Clipstone, for he was here on numerous occasions, the first time being about ten weeks after his accession—or rather his proclamation.

1307.—On the occasion of this visit the following documents were issued hence:—

20th September.—The King, by Letters Patent, constitutes William de Carleton, Roger de Hegham, and Thomas de Cantebrugg, Barons of the Exchequer, during his pleasure.

20th September. — King to the Sheriffs of England, ordering them to seize into the King's hands all the lands and tenements, goods and chattels, of Walter de Langton, Bishop of Litchfield, late treasurer of King Edward I.

25th September.—King asks the Sheriff of Gascony and the Constable of Bordeaux to ship 1,000 tuns of good wine for his Coronation, to be paid for by the Friscobaldi of Florence.

26th September.—King to Dionysius, King of Portugal, respecting the restitution of an English ship recovered by the Portuguese from some pirates.

With reference to this, the first, year of the King's reign, it may be added that among the documents formerly preserved in the office of the Queen's Remembrancer is mentioned one entitled "*Clipiston Regis: Compotus Thomae de Merke, servientis Domini Regis, in Manerio de Clipiston.*" Or in English—"Kings' Clipstone: The account of Thomas Mark, servant of the Lord King, in the Manor of Clipstone." A translation of this manuscript would doubtless prove extremely interesting.

1315.—A period of eight years seems to have elapsed before Edward paid his second visit. He was here at the commencement of November this year, and had a pretty long stay, as may be gathered from the following writs, &c., then dispatched.

2nd November.—King, by Letters Patent,

grants that John de Luter be quit of Tallages, Aids, Watch and Ward, &c.

2nd November.—King of England complains to the King of France of the conduct of certain pirates of Calais.

2nd November.—Complaint to the same effect on the part of certain merchants of the Germanic Hanse in England.

4th November.—King forbids the men of the Bishoprick of Durham to make private truces with the Scots.

9th November.—King orders the arrest of all the Flemings within the realm, the period of their departure having expired.

10th November.—King grants that William Trent, King's Butler, be quit of Tallages, Aids, Watch and Ward, &c.

23rd November.—King indemnifies the Bishop of Durham for having lent him the Castle of Norham.

(About this date Edward appears to have left Clipstone for a day or two. On 25th November he was at Agen, but had returned here by the beginning of the next month.)

1st December.—King's writ of *Monstraverunt* to the Barons of the Exchequer, concerning the Tallage of the men and tenants of Oswaldkirke Soke, Notts. Tallage signifies a tax, especially a feudal aid levied at the will of the lord. The writ above-mentioned was the remedy of the tenants of land in ancient demesne against their lord, when they were distrained to do other services than they or their ancestors had usually done and performed.

5th December.—King of England to the King of France, on the arrest of certain Spanish ships at Dover, on their way to Flanders.

Edward again left Clipstone for a short period, being at Doncaster 16th—20th December, but was back again towards the end of the month, for he rendered the period locally memorable by holding his Court and spending his Christmas here. On the occasion, according to one chronicler, he made many presents. *Donativa*, the word used, signifies royal presents, being frequently of a special character, though the record does not say what they were. If there was any reason to believe the chronicler had confounded this year with the following, which it is scarcely fair to assume, the purport of the passage would become evident. Edward probably remained here to the end of the year, issuing the following:

30th December.—King permits Ralph de Monthermer—going in pilgrimage to St. James—to appoint deputy-keepers of the forests beyond Trent.

1315-16.—During the same regnal year, probably on the occasion of one of his visits, Edward issued Letters Patent for the Chantry within the Manor of Clipstone. These, probably, were a confirmation of the original foundation.

1316.—The year was not far advanced before Edward was again here. On 5th March he directed hence his writ to the Sheriffs of England for making the Record *Nomina Villarum & earundem Domini*. This was an inquiry, for the King's information, as to who were the lords of hundreds, cities, vills, &c., throughout England. In it Clipstone was returned half a vill, and the King lord of it.

6th March.—King commands that the ordinances, lately made by the prelates and nobles of the realm, be carefully observed.

10th March.—Letters Patent to stop proceed-

ings in a dispute touching the Castle, &c., of Pool.

14th March.—King requests Amanenus de Lebret to attend the Parliament at London.

Edward was here again in December, as witness the following, then issued.

15th December, Credence for the Bishops of Norwich and Ely, and others, specially recommended by the King to the Pope.

15th December.—King to 22 Cardinals, to the same effect as preceding.

15th December, Safe Conduct for the same persons going to the Pope.

15th December, Credence for the same persons going to the Pope.

16th December, Commission to the above persons to treat respecting the issues of Aquitain, assigned by the King to the late Pope Clement V.

20th December.—King of England regrets that he cannot be present at the Coronation of Philip King of France.

20th December.—King permits David Earl of Athol to take all the plunder he can win from the Scots.

20th December.—King orders a free passage to be provided for Roger de Mortimer and the troops going from South Wales into Ireland.

20th December.—A grant to the widow of Piers Gavestone.

About this date Edward left Clipstone for a few days, to spend his Christmas in Nottingham, but returning again early in the year, stayed until the middle of January or later.

1317.—4th January.—King gives authority to the Bishops of Norwich and Ely, and others, to grant pensions to the Cardinals in the King's name.

4th January.—King requires fifteen of his nobles to go to Ireland to repulse the invasion of Edward de Brus.

4th January, King authorises the Bishops of Norwich and Ely, and others, to prorogue the period of his journey to Jerusalem.

4th January.—King forbids the holding of a tournament at Thetford.

4th January.—King orders the arrest of those who tourney at Thetford.

6th January.—King recommends to the Pope, Alexander de Bykenore to be Archbishop of Dublin.

It may here be mentioned that a Pope, having been chosen by the Conclave in August preceding, intelligence of the event was forwarded to Edward. A few selections from the orders for payments, in the royal accounts for this year, are appended :—

“To Adam Shirlock, coming to the King with letters from Sir Gilbert de Midelton, knight, and returning to the same with letters from the King—of the King’s gift, at Clipstone, 6th January, 6s. 8d.”

“To Amenenus de Pelagrua, Nuncio of the Pope, coming to our Lord the King at Clipstone, to announce the Creation and Coronation of his said Lord the Pope—of the King’s gift, £100.”

In the inventory of the jewels, a basin, chased and silver-gilt, with an ewer to match, by weight £3 14s. 4d., price £7 15s. 2d., is noted as having been presented by the King to Amenenus de Pelagrua, nephew of the Cardinal de Pelagrua and Nuncio of the Pope, at Clipstone on 8th January.

But to resume the calendar of writs issued on the occasion of this visit :—

7th January.—King to eight Cardinals, in favour of Alexander de Bykenore as Archbishop of Dublin.

7th January.—King to the Pope, in favour of William de Melton, Archbishop of York.

8th January.—King to Cardinal G., the Pope's Vice-chancellor, in favour of the same.

8th January.—King to the Pope, in favour of Thomas de Cherleton.

9th January.—Mandate to the Keeper of the King's Exchange.

10th January.—King to the Pope and Cardinals, in favour of John, Bishop of Winchester, his Chancellor.

10th January.—Proclamation against the introduction into the realm of clipped or false coin.

12th January.—King asks the Cardinals in the Papal court to forward the petitions presented by his ambassadors, to the Pope.

16th January.—King orders the arrest of all persons who tourney anywhere in England.

1318.—Edward was at Clipstone in August this year, and on the 18th he issued hence a Safe Conduct for the messengers of the Cardinals, going into Ireland. He was at Nottingham on 24th—26th, but had again returned to Clipstone on 5th September, if not earlier, and on the 10th he wrote to Philip King of France, complaining in detail of the injuries done by the latter's subjects to the English.

1320.—Edward was here once more in the fore part of this year, and on 3rd February dated hence a commission to Thomas Earl of Kildare and three others, to inquire who rendered help to Edward de Brus in Ireland.

1319-20.—The King in this, his 13th year, constituted Humphrey de Walden, Seneschal or

Steward of the King's castles, manors, parks, &c., in eleven counties, including Gringley, Wheatley, and Clipstone in Notts.

1320-1.—Edward committed to Thomas de Mark (he of year 1 ?), during the King's pleasure, the custody of the Pale of Clipstone, with all lands appertaining to it. From this and subsequent notes it appears that the appointment of a special official to attend to the Pale—doubtless around the Park—had become a necessity. This, presumably, was on account of its great extent, or perhaps on account of the alterations and extension which appear to have been made to the Park some time during the latter years of this reign—alluded to later on. His duties evidently were to keep it, and probably also a foss or deer-leap outside it, in proper repair, to prevent the escape of the game: the holding of certain lands being vested in the office.

1323-4.—The King this year constituted Humphrey de Walden and Richard de Ikene, Stewards of his castles, &c., in twelve counties, including Gringley, Wheatley, and the Pale of Clipstone, with appurtenances, in Notts. Edward appears thus to have appointed two persons to the office previously held by one, in which office, however, he incorporated the erstwhile separate one of Keeper of the Pale. The first-named person, who had previously held the appointment alone, possibly had failed to give satisfaction, and the following year, by a special grant, his place was filled by another, as seen by the next note.

1324-5.—The King constituted Richard de Winfarthing and Richard de Ikene, Stewards of his castles, &c., including the Pale of Clipstone, as above. The same Richard and Richard were further constituted Auditors of the Accounts.

CHAPTER V.

The Edwardian period and end of the Plantagenet Line, Part 2.

1272—1399.

Edward the Third became King in 1327, and his regnal years commence on 25th of January, so that they all but co-equal with the ordinary year—the first year of a double date being the one which may be commonly accepted.

1327-8.—The King in this, his first year, granted Letters patent for the Chantry within the Manor of Clipstone.

The same year Edward appointed Robert de Clipstone—probably a native of the place—Keeper of the Pale of Clipstone in Sherwood, with appurtenances, to hold during pleasure, &c. That he *did* please the King seems probable, judging by his promotion in the year following.

The same year John de Crumbwell, Warden of the forests north of Trent, was directed to recompense the Men and Tenants of the Vill of Kings' Clipstone, for the losses they sustained by the inclosure which our Lord Edward, late King of England, made in the ancient wood called Clipstone Park, in Clipstone Dam, and in certain other places in the Forest. The aforesaid Men and Tenants were to have Common of Pasture for all kinds of cattle and flocks—goats only excepted—in the King's Hay of Birkland; also, by the King's will, they may have Fugeria and Folia in Clipstone Park,—rendering annually to the King for the same Fugeria and Folia, 13s. 4d.

The Men and Tenants alluded to are called, by Thoroton, Hunters or Hunts-men. Christopher

Thompson, it may be added, in his autobiography, 1847, says that at Edwinstowe "the very houses still remain where the King's huntsmen trained up the hounds which chased the sleek deer in Birkland." Whether Thoroton is mistaken on this occasion, or whether the terms are here synonymous, must at present remain an open question. There is scarcely room to doubt, however, that the grant was made to the inhabitants. What the precise rights were which they had previously enjoyed, and whether they included the fishing of the Dam, unfortunately does not appear.

The privilege of *Fugeria* and *Folia*—which Thoroton says is called by one Forest Book *Gorste-grasse* and *Lease*—is probably an old legal term with a fixed significance, though I have failed as yet to meet with an explanation of it. Most probably it means firewood and leaves; with which, however, Thoroton's form, presumably intended as the English equivalent, seems scarcely to agree. "*Gos*" being the Anglo-Saxon for goose, the first word might be goose-grass: a creeping plant on which geese are accustomed to feed. But more probably it signifies gorse, possibly used as a fuel, which was known among the Anglo-Saxons as "*gorst*" or "*gost*," and which has "*grast*" as its equivalent in the Old High German, so that, if this is its meaning, the second syllable is a repetition of the first. The last word, as has been said, probably means leaves, though Thoroton's word *lease*, it may be mentioned, occurs in obsolete or provincial English as signifying a pasture or a common.

No doubt this right, as well as the Right of Common in Birkland, have long since lapsed, though we do not know when. Probably they

would be little respected by the new owners of the soil, after it had left the Crown. The exercise of the latter privilege, of course, depended on the annual payment being kept up, under which condition it might have been upheld until to-day, and for ever—all such rights preventing the owners of the soil from building on it, or altering its character in any way to the prejudice of the commoners. It has been said by an authority, I believe, that when a public or private right has been distinctly set down in writing, which can be proved and produced, no amount of unlawful user or lapse of time nullifies it. Nevertheless, though the moral right may exist, poor people would probably be unsuccessful in any attempt to establish the legal one.

1327.—Edward, like his father and predecessor, was at Clipstone in the first year of his reign, whence he dated the following :—

28th November.—King of England requests Charles King of France to do justice to William de Rydale, an English merchant, whose woad was arrested at Amiens.

28th November.—Safe Conduct for Bartholomew de Burghersh, Constable of Dover Castle, and William de Clynton, who was to accompany William Count de Hainault and his daughter Phillipa into England.

29th November.—King asks the Pope to confirm the decision of the dispute between the Archbishop of York and the Dean and Chapter, about the right of visitation.

1328-9.—The King, for good service, &c., granted to Robert de Clipstone, the custody of the Manor and Park of Clipstone, with its appurtenances, to hold so long as he should well and faithfully perform his office. He was to

answer to the Exchequer for the issues, and keep the Manor in repair at the King's cost, and the Park Pale at his own, receiving for the reparation of the said Pale, timber of the dry wood there, and taking every day for himself, the Parkers, and makers of the said Pale, 7d.

1328.—Edward paid another visit in August this year, dispatching the following :—

25th August.—King presents Geoffry de Cotes to the church of Fishlake, during a voidance of the Prior of Lewes.

30th August.—The Sheriffs of London are to provide 120 targets, painted with the King's arms, and 120 crossbows, to be sent to John de Roches, Custos of Guernsey, Jersey, Alderney, and Sark, for the defence of the said islands.

30th August.—King orders John de Roches, above-mentioned, to compel all bishops and others of Normandy who hold land in Guernsey, &c., to perform their homage and service.

30th August.—King orders the same John de Roches to complete the Castle at Girburgh in Guernsey.

1329-30.—A mandate was dispatched to the Sheriff, this year, of which the following is a translation :—Intelligence is brought to us that the great Gate and Sluice of our Mill of Clipstone, at the head of our great Dam there, are very weak and ruinous, and that the bursting of that Dam and loss of our fish therein is to be feared, except the same Gate and Sluice are repaired and amended. You are commanded, therefore, to repair and amend the same, for which ten marks will suffice.

1330-1.—Edward again, this year, issued Letters Patent for the Chantry in the Chapel within the Manor of Clipstone.

1331.—Edward made another call this year, and on 13th August wrote from Clipstone to four Cardinals, on behalf of Simon Archbishop of Canterbury.

During this reign, the particular year being uncertain, John de Sutton, of Warsop, presented a petition to Parliament which, from the reference to the King's father, may doubtless be placed well within the first ten years of this reign. As it is brief and explains itself, a translation in full of the petition, and the response to it, is appended :—

To our Lord the King and to his Council, showeth John de Sutton, Knight, that whereas he holds the Manor of Warsop of our Lord the King in Chief, and that the King has, during the last ten years, made an inclosure of his wood of Warsop, thus depriving the Manor of forty acres of soil, and holds it inclosed within, as part of, his Park of Clipstone,—to his great disinherittance, and to the impoverishment of his tenants, who ought to have Commonage there.

Answer : Let there be a writ sent to the Justice of the Forest, to make inquiry of the articles alleged in this petition, and of all other necessary matters, &c. Also let the records of the late King, our father, be searched, to see if something may not be found to stay John's action; the inquiry and certification to be returned into Chancery,—the King himself advises this.

Unfortunately we have no information as to the result of the inquiry. We do not even know if the petitioner recovered his forty acres of wood, or whether they remained in the Park. The King would probably use every endeavour to retain the land, as evinced by the above illustration of his personal interest in the matter.

1335.—Edward once more visited Clipstone this year, and dated from here the following writs :—

9th April.—William Archbishop of York is directed to permit the cross to be carried in the province of York before the Archbishop of Canterbury, on his way to the Parliament at York.

22nd April.—Safe conduct for John de Floto and Thomas of Bologna, Nuncios from the Pope Benedict XII., coming to England and Ireland.

24th April.—King orders the Sheriffs of Notts. and Yorkshire to protect the Archbishop of Canterbury (bearing his cross) on his journey to the Parliament summoned to York, on the morrow of Ascension Day.

1336-7.—The Jury, this year, said that Peter Witheberd, of Kings' Clipstone, had a messuage and one bovate and a half in Kings' Clipstone, by the service of 2s. 6d. per annum, according to the custom of the Manor of Kings' Clipstone, of the ancient demesne of the Crown, and William Witheberd was his son and heir, and above thirty years old.

A bovate was as much land as an ox, or pair of oxen, could till in a year, estimated at from thirteen to eighteen acres, but probably indefinite. The above passage seems to point to contemporary customs, both local and pertaining to the law of ancient demense. A copy or an account of the customs of the Manor would be of paramount interest. Surprisingly few old towns, however, have succeeded in preserving copies of their customs to the present day, and Clipstone, probably, is not more fortunate.

1339-40.—The King, for good service, &c., granted to his valet, Robert de Maule, the custody of his Manor and Park of Clipstone in Sherwood,

The same year an inquisition resulted in the report that Henry de Wytheton, chaplain, within the Manor of Clipstone, had by Letters Patent of the King, for his sustenance, five marks per annum, receiving it from the issues of the Manor aforesaid.

1345.—Edward was here again towards the end of this year, for on 10th December he directed hence a writ to his Treasurer, to deliver 51,000 florins to Peter Gretheved, for rewards to the Earls of Lancaster and Pembroke, and to Walter de Manny.

1350.—Edward was yet again at Clipstone this year, and under date 20th September, he granted hence a License of Mortmain to the Hospital of St. John the Baptist, Nottingham.

This, though it may not have been the last visit of Edward III., is the latest I have met with—as also, indeed, the last visit of any English monarch. Why Clipstone did not continue in favour with subsequent sovereigns we are at a loss to imagine, unless it was because they never became acquainted with it. The Manor, however, would have continued to have been of use, had it been retained and kept in repair, for subsequent monarchs frequently hunted in Sherwood Forest, lodging commonly at the houses of the nobility and others, in and around the Forest. James I. and his son Charles, while enjoying the pleasures of the chase, were often entertained at Rufford Abbey. The former, in the first year of his reign, complained that he had no royal residence near Sherwood Forest, and made overtures—unsuccessfully—with the object of acquiring the archiepiscopal palaces of Southwell and Scrooby.

1355-6.—Robert Rotor or Rotour was appointed Chaplain, this year, at the henceforth,

apparently, fixed annual stipend of one hundred shillings.

1358-9.—The King, for good service, &c., granted to Richard de la Vache, the office of Seneschal or Steward of Sherwood Forest, and the custody of the Manor and Meadow of Clipstone, and of the Hays of Bestwood, Bilhagh, and Birkland, with appurtenances, to have for his whole life, receiving yearly £10 12s. 11d.

The same year the King assigned Robert Rotor—described as ‘clericus’ or clerk, one in holy orders—to repair (or oversee the repairs of) the defects of the manor of Clipstone.

This was he who had been appointed Chaplain three years before. It may appear strange to us that a priest should be employed in an occupation of such a secular character, but that the practise was widely prevalent at this period we have ample evidence.

1362-3.—This year Richard le Vache, or de la Vache, received Letters Patent of the offices to which he had been appointed four years previously. The place of the term Meadow of Clipstone, in the original grant, is occupied by Park in the Patent, which seems to show that the phrases were synonymous.

1363-4.—This year, in the calendar of Charter Rolls, occurs as No. 7, CLIPSTONE IN SHERWOOD. We know nothing further of this charter or of its character, but if it was granted to the Men and Tenants, as those of towns were granted to the burgesses, it is possible that privileges of an important character were conferred, such as the grant of their own vill at fee-ferm after the manner of a borough. Perhaps this supposition is an entirely erroneous one, but divers references seem to support it.

1366-7.—Letters Patent were issued for Robert de Moreton, as Keeper of the Forest of Sherwood, and the Parks of Clipstone and Bestwood, and the Lodge in the Park of Bestwood, for life, with fees, &c.

1372-3.—The King granted to his Shieldbearer (scutifero) Nicholas Dabrichecourt, the custody of the Castle of Nottingham. On the same occasion, by another grant, he received the custody of the Forest of Sherwood, the Parks of Clipstone and Bestwood, the Manor of Clipstone, and the Lodge of Bestwood, during the King's pleasure; receiving per annum for the custody aforesaid, as wages, all fees paid for Expedition of dogs and for Chiminage within the Forest,—also he might take as much dry wood for fuel as he may need.

Chiminage, or Chiminagium, was toll paid for passing through a forest, with carts or horses loaded. With regard to Expedition, by the Forest Laws, persons dwelling within a forest were not allowed to keep greyhounds except by royal grant. Spaniels also seem to have been included in this ban, but little dogs might be kept. The intention was to exclude all dogs that might interfere with the venison, but, as it was found impracticable to forbid the keeping of house-dogs within the forest, residents were allowed to keep mastiffs on condition that they were so maimed that they could not chase the deer. This was effected by the operation known as Expedition, which consisted in cutting off the three claws of the fore-foot. The keeping of dogs unlawed or inexpeditated was punishable by an ameriement or fine of three shillings, known as 'footgeld.'

1375-6.—William de Elmeley, 'clericus,' set over the works, which had been ordained, at Not-

tingham Castle, Bestwood Lodge, and Clipstone Manor.

1376.—William Witheberd—probably the son and heir of Peter, as mentioned in 1336-7—held one bovate in Clipstone. This note, in default of access to the original publication, is taken from Curtis's *Notts*.

1376-7.—Letters Patent issued for Nicholas Danbridgecourt—doubtless he of four year previously—of the offices to which he was then appointed.

Richard II commenced to reign on 22nd June, 1377.

1382-3.—John Davy, Chaplain in the Chantry of Clipstone.

1383-4.—William Witheberd, son and heir of William (doubtless he of 1376), was found to have contravened the laws under which he held his land, having aliened a bovate and two messuages to John Wytheberd his brother, without the King's license, which John did no service.

1391-2.—An inquisition having been held to inquire whether the Manor and Vill were ancient demesne of the Crown, the jury reported that the Vill of Clipstone, in several parcels of accounts of collectors of fifteenths, &c., appeared ever to have been taxed among the boroughs and demesnes of the King. Though this verdict was a true one so far as it went, Clipstone would never have been recognised as ancient demesne in a court of law. For though it appears, in some way, to have assumed that reputation, yet it is not mentioned as land of the King in Domesday Book—the condition which alone decides ancient demesne.

CHAPTER VI.

The Houses of Lancaster and York.

1399—1485.

As illustrative of the circumstance that the glory of Clipstone as a royal residence was bound up with the House of Plantagenet, it is remarkable that the first Lancastrian monarch, in the first year of his reign and with the dawn of the fifteenth century, conveyed the Manor—though by no means finally—away from the Crown.

Henry IV. commenced to reign 30th September, 1399.

1400.—By agreement this year George [de] Dunbarre, Earl of March, or Earl of the Marches of Scotland, promised to transfer his homage to the King of England, who, in return, granted him the Castle of Somerton and the Manor of Clipstone, with appurtenances, for life.

The document was drawn up in quaint old English, commencing as follows :—

This Endenture Maad at the Toune of the Newe Castil opon Tyne, the xxv day of the Monyth of Juyl, the Zere, Frome the Incarnation of oure Lorde Jesu Crist, a Thousand and Four Hundreth,

Between the Noble and Mythty Prince *Henry*, by the Grace of God, Kyng of England and of France, Lorde of Ireland, on the ton syde, and his Cousin *George de Dunbarre*, Erle of the Marche of Scotland, on the tother syde, etc.

1401, June 28th.—The grant by which the Manor passed to the Earl bears this date. By a writ dated 20th July the King allows him to enter and stay in England.

1409-10.—John Bever, about this year, held a toft and bovate in Clipstone, in Free Burgage, by the service of 12d. per annum, as parcel of £4 10s. per annum, the ferm of the Town of Clipstone.

Burgage was a tenure whereby lands or tenements in cities and towns were held of the King or other lord for a certain yearly rent. Blackstone says Tenure in Burgage is where the King or other person is lord of an ancient borough, in which the tenements are held by a rent certain. H. Cox writes 'the more ancient boroughs hold their land in Burgage.' The absence of further local information of this period, from which some more definite conclusion might be arrived at, is to be regretted, but it seems evident that the ferm of Clipstone was a fixed one, and contributed by the tenants in proportion to their holdings.

1414-15.—The only note we have of the reign of Henry V., whose years commence on the 21st March, is in the King's Letters Patent to the Abbot of Rufford, in which he confirms the possession of lands by the Abbey with their bounds, &c., and among other provisions then confirmed, 'the men of the Manors of Clipstone and Edwinstowe may take nothing in the wood of the said Abbot within the Forest of Sherwood.'

The reign of Henry VI. commenced the 1st September, 1422.

In a local guide book occurs the absurd statement that Henry VI., on the 20th March, 1422, granted a charter to Nottingham at Clipstone Palace. As we have seen, this King did not commence to reign until upwards of five months later, when only an infant of eight months. His father, the reigning monarch on the above date, was then at Rouen, France, but neither of them ever visited Clipstone.

1444.—The Manor was again in the hands of the Crown, for on the 16th July, 1444, Geoffry [de] Kniveton was made Keeper of the Castles at Nottingham and Rockingham, and of the Manor of Clipstone, and the Lodge of Bestwood in Sherwood, for life.

This was by no means the commencement of Kniveton's connection with the Forest: probably the above was but a formal confirmation of what he had long held. The Castle of Nottingham, with Sherwood Forest, &c., was granted on the 4th March, 1403, to Henry IV.'s Queen, Joan of Navarre, who held the same for many years after his death. She brought an action against a Nottingham man in 1431, for the ferm of the Chiminage of the Forest, which she had let to him. She then appeared by Geoffry Kneveton and Robert Clapham, her attornies. There are many actions entered by her in the Nottingham Court Rolls for agistment, hay, &c. Geoffry Kneveton—presumed to be the same man—was Mayor of Nottingham in 1446-7. The reason of the preposition 'de' being not regularly prefixed to the surname of this official is because the custom was dying out at the beginning of this century.

1445.—The following is an abstract of the translation of a grant, by Letters Patent, to Ralph Lord Cromwell, Knight, bearing date the 1st February :—

The King, for good and noble service many times rendered, grants to the said Ralph the office of Constable of Nottingham Castle, the office of Steward and Keeper of the Forest of Sherwood, and of the Parks of Bestwood and Clipstone, and of the Woods of Bilhagh, Birkland, Rumwood, Ouseland, and Fulwood; also the Mills of Nottingham, called the Castle Mills, and the Rivers of Trent and Leen

and the free fishery in the same, and all our meadows under the Castle there, pertaining to the office. Also the same Ralph is to have all chattels waived and estrays arising within the said Forest and Woods, and all Chiminage in the said Forest, Parks, and Woods. Also all Fines, Issues, and Amerciaments of our Men and Tenants within the Forest arising, and forfeitures for the not lawing of their dogs, called Dogsilver, as well before our Justices of the Forest as before other Justices or Ministers. To hold all the above, of us and our heirs, by Fealty only for all Services.

Ralph Lord Cromwell died 4th January, 1455, leaving no issue.

It may here be added, also, that this does not represent the commencement of Cromwell's association with Sherwood. In 1440-1 he brought an action—doubtless in his official capacity—against a Nottingham butcher for breach of Bestwood Park, and there are numerous other actions by Cromwell, entered on the Nottingham Rolls, wherein he sues for herbage, &c.

1452.—This year the whole Township left the Crown, though the grant, again, was only for the life of the recipients. The King granted to Edmund Earl of Richmond and Jasper Earl of Pembroke, in fee, the Manors of Mansfield and Linby in Sherwood, and the Manor, Demesne, and Vill of Clipstone in Sherwood, also the demesnes of Harestan and Bolsover, Derbyshire.

These estates were settled on them when their titles were granted, which was on 23rd November, 1452. The former was created Earl of Richmond, with precedence before all other earls. He was brother, by his mother, to the King, Henry VI. He died on the morrow of All Souls' Day, 3rd November, 1456, when his share of the estates, of

course, reverted to the other. Though the local association of this distinguished individual was not long, it will not be forgotten, for the son and heir which he left—Henry aged fifteen weeks—was afterwards King Henry VII.

Jasper, Earl of Pembroke, was his brother, and was afterwards, 27th October, 1485, promoted to the dignity of Duke of Bedford.

From the following, it may be gathered that some interest in the Manor was yet retained by the Crown.

1471-8.—It has been recorded that Lord Gervase Cilfton, Esquire of the Body to Edward IV—who died 12th May, 1491, and was buried at Clifton—was Sheriff of the counties of Notts. and Derby, in that monarch's 11th and 17th years, 1471-2 and 1477-8. Also that he was Receiver General of these counties, Steward of the King's Manors of Gedling, Shelford, Stoke Bardolph, &c., and Surveyor of the works and repairs in his Castle of Nottingham, and his Lodges of Barkwood (Bestwood ?) Park and Clipstone.

It may be added, as explanatory in part of the paucity of notes during the above period, that the principal of the published Rolls series end before the fifteenth century, while the State Papers do not commence until after that age.



CHAPTER VII.

Tudor Period.

1485-1603.

1485, September 22nd.—Grant for life to Simon Digby of the office of Lieutenant of Sherwood Forest, Bestwood and Clipstone, &c.; also grant for life of the office of Keeper of the Park of Clipstone and of the Woods of Nottingham.

November. In the Parliament held this month was introduced the 'Act of Resumption,' for the King to resume possession of all castles, lordships, honours, manors, lands, fee-ferms, &c., &c., granted during the three previous reigns, or during the supremacy of the House of York. The Act has a vast number of exceptive clauses, one of which is that it "be not in any wise prejudiciall or hurtfull to Simon Dygby, of or for the Office of Levetenauntship of the Forest of Shirwood, Beskwood, Clipston, and Bosturn, of Billowe Birkland, Ronwod, Osland and Fulwood, with purtinaunce, in the Countie of Notingham, with the Kepyng of a Parke called Clipston aforesaid, with the Wood of Notyngnam, in the same Countie, unto hym graunted by the King oure Sovereigne Lord, by reason of the said Graunte: but the L [ette] res Patents therupon, be good and avallable unto the said Simon; the said Acte or Actes notwithstanding."

1486, May 13th.—Grant for life to Richard Scoley, chaplain (in consideration of faithful service, good disposition, and because he for a long time occupied and held the same by gift and grant of Edward IV., the King's progenitor) of the Chantry within the Manor of Clipstone, together

with the Chapel of St. Edwin, within the Forest of Sherwood; also grant for life, of 100s., yearly, in aid of Divine service there, out of the issues, &c., of the counties of Notts. and Derby, in the same way as 100s. yearly were allowed in the Great Roll, 29th Edward III., to Walter de Montgomery, Sheriff of Notts. and Derby, for paying to Robert Rotour, Chaplain of the said Chantry and Chapel, and in the Great Roll, 6th Richard II., to John Look, Sheriff of Notts. and Derby, for payment to John Davy, of Colwick, Chaplain of the same.

19th October; King to the Sheriff of Notts. and Derby,—mandate to the Sheriff of the said counties to pay to Richard Scoly arrears of the said annuity from the said 13th May, and also the annuity, from time to time, during his life, in accordance with the grant.

1495, October.—The King, in Parliament, ordained that the Manor, Lordship, and Town of Clipstone in Sherwood, with many other places in the possession of his uncle Jasper Duke of Bedford, should revert to himself after the death of the said Jasper, and not to his (the King's) second begotten son Henry Duke of York.

Perhaps signs of the Duke of Bedford's approaching dissolution were then visible, in view of which the above announcement was made. For in the following month, 21st December, 1495, he died, and in his will, dated 15th December, appointed that certain of his lordships and lands in Notts., Derby, and Warwick, of the yearly value of £40, should be amortised for the finding of four priests to sing perpetually for his soul and for those of his relatives.

1514.—On the 1st February, Henry VIII. granted in special tail Clipstone, with Linby, Mansfield, Mansfield Woodhouse, and Sutton-in-Ashfield in

Notts., to be held by the service of one knight's fee, (with many other manors in other counties,) to Thomas Howard Earl of Surrey. This took place on his creation into the dignity of Duke of Norfolk, for his services at Flodden Field. The local estates, however, came again to the Crown, being then exchanged by the King for some others. This nobleman, who died 21st May, 1524, was not the least illustrious of the number who have been associated with Clipstone. His connection with the Battle of Flodden, as leader of the English, is best immortalised in Scott's *Marmion*.

1519.—Royal grant to John Byron, Squire of the Body: to be one of the four Foresters of Sherwood Forest, that is to say, Keeper of the Lodge of Immerslowe and Clipstone Shrogges in "le Northbale" or the North Keeping of the said Forest, with 4d. a day, in place of William Pye, deceased.—Greenwich, 8th May.

1520.—Grant to William West, Groom of the Privy Chamber, of the quitrent of tenements called "le Croune" in Westchepe, parish of St. Mary Colchurch, London, forfeited by Sir Richard Charleton, attainted; and of the Keepership of the Castle or Manor, and of the Park of Clipstone in Sherwood Forest, Notts., and the pond called Clipstone Damme.—Eltham, 25th March.

1524.—Thomas Manners, Lord Roos, to be Warden and Chief Justice Itinerant of Sherwood Forest, and of the parks of Bilhagh, Birkland, Rumwood, Owseland, Fulwood, Bestwood, and Clipstone, Notts.—*Del.* Westminster, 12th July.

1524.—Commission to the Abbot of Welbeck, the Abbot of Rufford, the Prior of Newstead, Sir Brian Stapleton, Sir Richard Basset, Sir John Vyllers, and John Hercy, to survey and report into Chancery the condition of Nottingham Castle,

the parks of Nottingham, Bestwood, and Clipstone, the Manor of Clipstone, the Forest of Sherwood, and the woods of Thorneywoods, and at the said Castle, with the habiliments of war, and also the deer in the said manors, &c.—Westminster, 23rd November.

A commission like this is calculated to raise the highest expectations concerning the report of the inquiry into the condition of the never-described Manor House, which, however, are doomed to disappointment. Either the inquiry did not take place or the report has been lost, or perhaps it has been overlooked by those who overhauled and calendared this series of State Papers. At least we hear no more of it. Another inquiry concerning the deer, a few years later, had a better result.

1528.—Grant in survivorship to Sir John Byron and William West, Groom of the Privy Chamber, of the custody of the Manor, Castle, &c., of Clipstone, Sherwood, Notts., on surrender by West of Patent of 1520.—*Del.* Westminster, 1st April.

1531.—Commission to the Abbot of Welbeck, Sir Richard Sacheverell, Sir Brian Stapleton, John Hercy, and Roger Greenhagh, to visit and survey the parks of Nottingham, Bestwood, and Clipstone, the Forest of Sherwood, and the woods of Thorneywood, and to certify into Chancery the state and number of the deer.—Westminster, 20th February.

This commission, like a former one, had no result. Sir Richard Sacheverell, Sir Brian Stapleton, Sir John Villers, and Roger Greenhagh addressed a communication to Thomas Earl of Rutland (Warden of the Forest) dated 18th of May at Mansfield. It was to the effect that a Commission, dated 20th February, to the Abbot of Welbeck, John Hercy, and the above-mentioned, was delivered to the said Commissioners on the last day

of April. They met at Nottingham on the 2nd May, where Nicholas Strelley, Lieutenant of the Forest, told them he must have three weeks, and the time of the year for taking any view was past. They gave him fifteen days, and on the 18th May met him again at Mansfield, where he said he, nor any of his officers, had stirred any of the deer, for it would have done more hurt than good, the season of the year being passed.

Nicholas Strelley addressed a similar epistle to the same.

1532.—15th January.—A schedule attached to the Commission of the 20th February, 1531, contains the report of the Abbot of Welbeck, Sir Richard Sacheverell, Sir Brian Stapleton, Sir John Villers, John Hercye, and Roger Greenhagh, in pursuance of the King's Commission, dated the 12th November, 1531. The local report is: View 15th January, at Clipstone stone Shroggys 310 red deer, of which [are] 70 deer of antler. . . . Clipstone Park, 100 fallow deer, of which 26 [are] deer of antler. This interesting document also affords accounts of the deer at thirteen other places in the Forest, concluding: Total fallow deer in the three parks and Thorneywoods 11 hundred and 31. Red deer within the Forest without the parks, after six score to the hundred, 11 hundred and 66. Red deer in Bestwood 10 score and 14. Total red deer, 13 hundred and 40. Endorsed with a memorandum of delivery into the Exchequer, 16th Nov., 1532.

We thus learn that Clipstone was remarkably well stocked with the royal game—the number of red deer exceeded that at any other place in the Forest. These animals were doubtless the descendants of those hunted by the Plantagenets, and in earlier days by the Saxons. Their descendants

remained until the time of the Commonwealth, and others took their places at a later period.

1545.—The Act of Parliament was passed this year for dissolving, and appropriating to the King the revenues and possessions of, colleges, free chapels, chantries, hospitals, fraternities, brotherhoods, guilds, and stipendiary priests. By virtue of this—if the free Chapel of Clipstone had continued to flourish in use to so late a date—it would be stripped of its furniture and belongings, its chantry dissolved, and the last chaplain and chantry priest dismissed—the echoes of the final requiem for the soul of Henry II. having died away.

1551.—Thoroton says that on the 16th November the Manor of Perlethorp, sometime parcel of the possessions of Edward, son of George Duke of Clarence, and late in the tenure of John Byron, Knight, with Knesall and Clipstone, &c., were among other things granted to Edward Fynes, Lord Clinton and Saye, and his heirs. This would seem to imply that Clipstone had been possessed by the son of George Duke of Clarence (that Duke, by the way, who met his death in an unique manner by being drowned in a butt of malmsey) and afterwards by Lord Clinton. Evidently, however, such reference is meant only for Perlethorpe. Kneesall and Clipstone are apparently merely mentioned as having been also in the custody of Sir John Byron.

However, during this reign of Edward VI. (1547—1553) the King passed Clipstone to John Earl of Warwick and Henry Sydney, as the possession of Jasper Duke of Bedford. But it came again to the Crown, and there remained until the time of James I.

1568.—March 19th, Westminster. Grant to Thomas Markham, Standard Bearer of the Gentlemen Pensioners, of the office of Keeper of Clipstone Manor, Sherwood Forest, county Notts., the site of the late Castle, Park, &c., with the customary fees; also, the fishing of the Dam, and Herbage and Pannage of the Park, as held by the late Sir John Byron and William West.—Endorsed with note of a reversion for Sir Roger Aston.

The right of Herbage carries its own meaning. Pannage was the right for swine to feed on the mast in a forest,—acorns, beech-nuts, &c. The most important passage to us, however, is the reference to ‘the site of the late Castle.’ This shows us on the one hand the character of the structure—so alluded to twice previously—and on the other that it was no more. It seems to have been standing on the appointment of the Commission in 1524, also in 1528, and was probably dismantled and demolished between these dates. It is likely that it had been allowed to fall into decay, or at least much neglected, after it had ceased to be the resort of royalty.

It is surprising how little we are able to gather respecting the building itself. We can only surmise when it originated, we have no drawing or description of its appearance, and the reason and time of its demolition cannot be decided. Neither are we informed how the, necessarily large, quantities of materials were disposed of. It is probable that all the valuable portions, fixtures, &c., were sold for the King, while much of the masonry—as was commonly the case with ruins—would be appropriated by such of the surrounding inhabitants as had uses for it. It is a common occurrence, in the neighbourhood of sites of ancient buildings, to discover fragments of worked masonry, re-used

by being built into cottages, walls, &c., and it is not unlikely that such may exist around Clipstone.

1584-5.—The amounts of the “Pentecostal Offerings,” formerly paid at Whitsuntide, from time immemorial, by every village and hamlet in the county to the church of Southwell, are all recorded by Thoroton from a book bearing this date. Clipstone paid 16d.

1591.—In a list of the officers of Sherwood Forest, written about this year, occurs for Clipstone Shrogges the Earl of Shrewsbury, deputy Plesington; and for Clipstone Thomas Markham, underkeeper Paul Dawe.



CHAPTER VIII.

Stuart Kings.

1603—1714.

1603.—June 9th.—This date is on a minute by secretary Coke of the King's pleasure to make the grant in reversion, to Roger, Earl of Rutland, of the office of Keeper of the Parks of Bestwood and Clipstone, for life.

James I., who reigned from 1603 to 1625, "passed" Clipstone to the feofees of Gilbert seventh Earl of Shrewsbury, a resident local nobleman. The latter's grandfather, Francis the fifth Earl, had obtained of Henry VIII. the inheritance of the site of Worksop Priory. George son of Francis, and sixth Earl, married (being her fourth husband) Elizabeth, commonly known as "Bess" of Hardwick, who, by Sir William Cavendish, her second husband, who died in 1557, had issue three sons and three daughters. Mary, the youngest of these daughters, on the occasion of her mother's marriage to the Earl, was also wedded to his son and heir Gilbert—afterwards seventh Earl as mentioned above. Earl George died in 1590—his widow surviving him seventeen years—and left Gilbert as his son and successor. The latter was constituted by James I., in the first year of his reign, Guardian and Chief Justice of all forests north of Trent, and on 13th March, 1607, Constable of Newark and Forester of Sherwood Forest for life. He signed the proclamation of James, as King, and shortly afterwards entertained him at Worksop in munificent style, in April, 1603. As we have seen in part, however,

the trouble he took upon himself in connection with royalty was most substantially rewarded. He died 8th May, 1616, leaving no issue.

Elizabeth Hardwick, as has been mentioned, had three sons by Sir William Cavendish, of whom the youngest, Charles, bought, or was settled in by his mother, the estates of Welbeck and Bolsover, in the former of which I suppose Clipstone was comprised.

It will be convenient here to complete an account of the descent of the estates down to the present time. Though it would have been more consistent, in a chronicle of this kind, to have recorded the accession of each new owner and successor under the corresponding date, yet, as certain of the earlier dates are not at present to hand, I may be pardoned for completing a brief account in this place.

Sir Charles Cavendish, of Welbeck, died in 1617. Of his three sons, William, born in 1592, was the second, but as the first died in infancy he succeeded to the estates, afterwards becoming Baron Ogle, Viscount Mansfield, and Duke of Newcastle. He is best remembered by his "Life," written by his wife; he died in 1676. His son Henry succeeded him, and died without male issue in 1691, settling all his real estate on his third daughter, Margaret, and her heirs. She married John Holles, Earl of Clare, who was created Duke of Newcastle in 1694, dying in 1711. They left an only daughter, Lady Henrietta Cavendish Holles, who inherited the estates and married Edward Harley Earl of Oxford, founder of the celebrated Harleian Library. The only issue of this union was another heiress, Margaret Cavendish Harley. This lady carried the estates to the Dukes of Portland by marrying, in 1734, William second

Duke, whose father, the first Duke, died in Jamaica, in 1726.

Duke William died in 1762, and was succeeded by his son William Henry Cavendish, who died in 1809. He was succeeded by his son, another William Henry, fourth Duke, who died in 1854. His son and successor, William John Cavendish Scott Bentinck, was born in 1800, and died unmarried in December, 1879. He was succeeded by his cousin, William John Arthur Charles James (son of Arthur, brother of the fourth Duke), sixth Duke and present peer, who was born in 1857.

1609.—In a survey of Sherwood Forest, taken this year, it is described as divided into three parts or districts—north, south, and middle, Clipstone being in the north. Among the measurements in this survey we find Clipstone Park given as 1583 acres, 1 rood, 35 poles. The area of the different parts of the Clipstone quarter of Birkland follow.

1630, December 26th, Whitehall.—Grant to the Earl of Pembroke and Montgomery of the Stewardships of Devizes, county Wilts; Dinas, county Brecon., and Brecknock, &c., and the office of Bailiff of Burly in the New Forest, and the Walk called Inneslow Lodge and Clipstone Shrogges in the Forest of Sherwood. All these offices had been held by the Earl's deceased brother, the Earl of Pembroke.

1640, June 16th.—Petition of William Earl of Newcastle to the King. Petitioner is seized in fee of several woods in the manors and parishes of Clipstone, Mansfield Woodhouse, Sutton-in-Ashfield, and Kirkby, in or near your Forest of Sherwood. That the tenants, pretending to have Common of Estovers in those woods by colour of

assignments from your Foresters and officers there, which they obtain without difficulty at the courts of the Forest, cut and carry off a great part of them; but petitioner, the undoubted owner, makes no benefit, being restrained by Forest Laws from cutting the woods by such ordinary course of assignment, whence he is unable to profit by his own inheritance. He prays for Letters Patent granting him and his heirs power to cut and take away the said woods at will, though they be within your Forest.

The petition was referred to the Earl Marshall, Justice in Eyre of the forests beyond Trent, who was to certify his opinion of petitioner's desire.

It is more probable that all the inhabitants above-mentioned had a vested right and upheld it, rather than obtained it as easily as the Earl stated. It may appear strange to us that he was not allowed to cut down his own woods. These, however, as part of the Forest, had formerly belonged to the Crown, and when such lands were granted to individuals the King retained the "vert and venison," or trees and deer, so that no detriment might result to the Forest as a hunting-ground—the trees being necessary for the protection of the deer. Common of Estovers was originally the tenants' right to take wood necessary for the use of his farm or house off his lord's estate. According to the use for which it was granted this was known as house-bote, cart-bote, hay or hedge-bote, &c.

1655.—From the following we learn something of the treatment of the Duke of Newcastle's property while he was a fugitive on the Continent, during the Commonwealth—from which period may be dated the commencement of the decay of Sherwood.

The four Verderers and Ranger of Sherwood Forest to John Earl of Clare, Lord Warden of the Forest:—The Forest is ruined, especially Clipstone Woods, where the inhabitants have Right of Estovers, by Mr. Clark, on pretence of a grant from the Committee for the sale of traitors' estates. He has felled one thousand trees, and daily fells more, having sold three hundred to Phillips of Bawely, for ship timber. He fells in the heart of the Forest, where the deer have their greatest relief. There is much good ship timber in the Forest. Robert Baskerville, late Woodward General, has died; another should be appointed, or the woods will suffer much. Blidworth Attachment, 16th April, 1655.

Mr. Clark above-mentioned had obtained leave to sell, for his own use, twenty-eight thousand trees in Sherwood Forest. It was recorded, under date 22nd April, that "he sets on all the workmen that he can get at very high wages, and before the bark will peel, contrary to the statute, and sells at very low rates, like Solomon's harlot that would have the living child divided. He sweeps clean, leaving no standards according to law, which will bare of timber a forest that stands near two navigable rivers, the Trent and Idle."

1672.—This year was published "The life of the Thrice Noble, High and Puissant Prince, William Cavendish, Duke, Marquess, and Earl of Newcastle," &c., by Margaret, his second wife. We learn from the work that the Duke received nothing from his estates for eighteen years, viz., from the commencement of the Civil War, 11th June, 1642, till his return from banishment, after the Restoration, 28th May, 1660. Being at the fatal battle of Hessom Moor and foreseeing, after the defeat of the Royal party, that the war was

practically lost, with £90 in his possession—the whole of his ready money—he set sail for Hamburg, arriving on the 8th July, 1644, after a voyage of four days. While he was in exile his lands, as we have seen, were seized by Parliament. On his return some lands, he found, could not be recovered longer than for the term of his own life, some not at all, others to the value of £730 yearly were voluntarily restored. His claim to Clipstone to which, as will be seen, he was so deeply attached, never seems to have been disputed. He sold some of his lands to buy back or restore others, though some could not be sold, being entailed. The following local passage, from this work, arouses faint visions of the probable glories of Clipstone Park in the days of the Plantagenets:—

Of eight Parks, which my Lord had before the Wars, there was but one left that was not quite destroyed, *viz.*, *Welbeck-Park* of about four miles compass; for my Lord's Brother Sir *Charles Cavendish*, who brought out the life of my Lord in that Lordship, saved most part of it from being cut down; and in *Blore-Park* (Staffordshire) there were some few Deer left: The rest of the Parks were totally defaced and destroyed, both Wood, Pales and Deer; amongst which was also *Clipston-Park* of seven miles compass, wherein my Lord had taken much delight formerly, it being rich of Wood, and containing the greatest and tallest Timber-trees of all the Woods he had; in so much that onely the Pale-row was valued at £2,000. It was water'd by a pleasant River that runs through it, full of fish and Otters; was well stock'd with Deer, full of Hares, and had great store of Part-iges, Poots, Pheasants, &c., besides all sorts of Water-fowl; so that this Park afforded all manner of sports, for Hunting, Hawking, Coursing, Fish-

ing, &c., for which my Lord esteemed it very much: And although his Patience and Wisdom is such, that I never perceived him sad or discontented for his own Losses and Misfortunes, yet when he beheld the ruines of that Park, I observed him troubled, though he did little express it, onely saying he had been in hopes it would not have been so much defaced as he found it, there being not one Timber-tree in it left for shelter. However he patiently bore what could not be helped, and gave present order for the cutting down of some Wood that was left him in a place near adjoining, to repale it, and gat from several Friends Deer to stock it.

Poot, mentioned among the birds of the Park, means the blackcock or the red grouse, probably the former, though it has also been stated that it signifies a young bird of any kind.

Later on, by way of helping us to form some idea of the loss his Lordship sustained on account of the War, the Duchess gives a list of his lands and their yearly value (which he lost for eighteen years) compiled partly from the value given by his own 'Surveighers' in a survey taken in the year 1641 of some of the lands, the rest being quoted at the rental at which they were let at the time of writing,—after the War. Among those in Nottinghamshire occurs the Manor of Clipstone and Edwinstowe £334 9s. 8d. It is a pity Clipstone is not quoted separately. A few pages later, giving us an account of the loss sustained by timber cut down, the first and most important item is set down by the Duchess as Clipstone Park and Woods cut down to the value of £20,000. This is double the amount of the largest of the other items, and much more than double the

amount of the whole of his Grace's woods in any other county.

1677.—Thoroton, in his great work published this year, says :—There is scarcely any ruins left of the Kings' old house, except a piece of a thick Stone Wall, and the Park is also cleared of all the Gallant Oaks wherewith it was well furnished before the late Rebellion. He adds that there are Customary Tenants in Clipstone, though not quite in ancient demesne. The phrase is probably the equivalent of Copyholders.



CHAPTER IX.

House of Brunswick.

1714, down to date.

The historical story of Clipstone may be said to have ended, practically, with the Caroline War. Subsequent ages have been so uneventful as to leave scarcely anything to record beyond the slight notes and comments of local writers, such as will here be mentioned under the dates of their publications. Upwards of a century from the time of Thoroton is therefore compulsorily passed over.

1783.—The ruins of the Kings' House, unfortunately, have rarely been made the subject of the engraver's art. The earliest, probably, and perhaps also the best pictorial representation is in Grosse's *Antiquities*, published this year. It was drawn for the author by the local antiquary Major Rooke. It also appears in Throsby's work, in the next decade,—besides a smaller sketch in a vignette under the author's portrait. There is a small woodcut of the ruin, it may be added, in a book on Worksop, &c., printed in 1875.

1799.—Major Rooke published his pamphlet on Sherwood Forest this year. In his list of nine keepers occurs Len. Huntington for Birkland, Bilhagh, and Clipstone Skroggs. Skrogs or scrogs is said to signify stunted woody growth, and this no doubt illustrates the character of that part of the forest-land so designated at Clipstone. The keepers above mentioned were appointed by the Verderers during pleasure, having each an annual salary of twenty shillings, paid by the Duke of

Newcastle out of fee-ferm rent for Nottingham Castle. Near the north end of Clipstone Park, adds Rooke, is a large tree called the Broad Oak, which measures 27 feet 6 inches in circumference.

1810.—An incident occurred about this year which, to the antiquarian student, was almost of similar disastrous import to the demolition of the House in the sixteenth century. The Duke of Portland had the old foundations dug up entirely, with the object of utilising the stone in his new system of drainage. Probably numerous objects of interest would be turned up on the ancient site, of which no record has been preserved, though in all likelihood the 'large vaults,' which it has been so often stated existed previously, are merely a more recent imaginative development of the word 'foundations.' Still the only means by which, in modern times, might have been ascertained the original extent, character, plan, and style of the buildings, the period of their erection, and other points of deepest interest, have been removed for ever, and no chart or notes preserved.

1813.—Laird, in his topographical work published this year, says Clipstone Park contains a handsome lodge, but small and modern, belonging to that nobleman (Duke of Portland). This park, he continues, is near eight miles in circumference. The only part remaining of the palace, which stands in a large field close to the village, seems to have been the hall; and several of its Gothic windows are yet entire. Its foundations have, formerly, been very extensive, but during the last summer great part of these were dug up to be employed in a system of drainage which the Duke of Portland has commenced upon his property here. We understood, however, from the workmen, that his Grace had given strict orders that

the venerable walls of this once royal pile should not be touched. Even in its present delapidated state it would be picturesque if shaded with planting; it is still, notwithstanding, interesting, and strongly raises the idea of times long past, when steel-clad knights and barons bold, and haughty priests, and smiling courtiers, and straight-laced dames, and blushing damsels and the whole etcetera of feudal pomp and high-minded chivalry paced its now deserted halls, where the bat and toad assume the empire of the night, and where the sun only breaks in upon a scene of desolation.

1827.—The following poetical allusion to the palace and to King John occurs in Robert Millhouse's *Sherwood Forest and other poems*, 1827 :—

But lo! where yonder claim the minstrels' song,
The mouldring ruins of a kingly dome!
Here, oft retiring with his hunter throng,
The timid despot sought this greenwood home,
When foiled by England's Peers, or vexed by
haughty Rome.

The ruins do not appear to have often attracted the attention of the poetically-inspired, which is probably due, in some degree, to their insignificance. Miss Williams, in her poem on *Sherwood Forest*, 1832, alludes to them.

1832.—In White's first Nottinghamshire Directory occurs :—On our visit we observed under the ruins large heaps of stones which some churlish surveyor appeared to have broken for the purpose of repairing the roads, and which would have been so appropriated had not his Grace, on hearing of the delapidation, forbidden their removal. Of the 1648 acres in this township, nearly 900 form one of the wildest wastes of the forest. Clipstone feast is on the first Sunday in November.

The area given is that of the Park,—not the township. Two public-houses (the same number as at present) are mentioned in this directory, viz.: Fox and Hounds and the Dog and Duck. The former name remains, but the latter, apparently, has changed to the present Portland Arms.

1839-40.—In the first volume of the Journal of the Royal Agricultural Society is a paper on Clipstone Water Meadows (with plan), from which the following notes are taken:—

The land immediately occupied by these meadows was in its wild state a line of hill-sides, covered with gorse and heather,—a rabbit-warren over which a few sheep wandered,—and a swampy valley below, thick set with hassocks and rushes, the favourite haunt of wild ducks and snipes, through which the Maun wound its way. The whole track, both upland and lowland, was of very little value. The valley was in many places from nine to ten feet deep in bog, and almost worthless; the hill-sides varied in quality; but £80 a year would have been a full rent for the 300 acres. Indeed, the whole of the Clipstone Park farm, when taken in hand in the year 1816, containing 1487 acres, had been let for the sum of £346.

1841.—The drawing-room at the Park Farm was fitted up as a place of worship, the Duke of Portland paying the Vicar of Edwinstowe £50 per annum for doing duty there once every Sunday.

In the Census for this year the inhabitants are set down as 286; acres in the township, 4,017. Unfortunately I have not been able to consult the census for any of the four previous and earliest occasions (1801, 1811, 1821, 1831).

1842.—The erection of the “Duke’s Archway,” the design of which is said to have been taken

from the Priory Gatehouse, Worksop, was commenced in June.

1844.—*White's Directory* :—Nine cottage houses, one acre of freehold, and four acres of copyhold land belong to other proprietors (than the Duke of Portland). There is every reason to suppose that Clipstone will soon emerge—under the fostering care of his Grace—from being the most decayed village in the county, and become the neatest.

This year the tithes were commuted,—the great tithe for £380, for which the Duke of Portland is lessee under Earl Manvers, and £168 for the vicarial tithe.—*Directory*, 1853.

Curtis, in his work published about this year, gives the following flourish concerning the Flood Dykes, and other notes :—A perennial fertility is maintained, and luxuriant crops of grass and clover flourish over a district where comparative sterility once reigned in absolute and apparently interminable power. The Lodge, a farm house, is built on the site of some former mansion, part of the remains of which are incorporated with the present edifice. Parliament Oak remains, and another has been planted to succeed and mark the spot (?) Part of the lordship is uninclosed. Clipstone has one-third of the charitable bequest left by Ann and William Monday in 1627, i.e., the whole estate of the above, consisting of 109 acres and 3 perches of land, the rents thereof to be distributed for the benefit of the poor of the parish by the churchwardens of Edwinstowe.

1851.—255 inhabitants.

1861.—266 „

1871.—220 „

1881.—256 „

1883.—This year was published, by the Historical Manuscripts Commission, a report on the

Thoresby archives. The report, however,—in glaring contrast to the admirable ones of the present day,—is so meagre and ill done as to be all but worthless. The only local notes are:—Thick folio, vellum, 16th century, surveys of Clipstone, Cuckney, and other places. Pleas of Sherwood Forest at Nottingham before the Justices of the King itinerant on the morrow of St. Hillarie, 15 Ed. (one is)—The plea betwixt the Abbot of Rufford and the Men of Edwinstowe and Clipstone for pulling up trees and gaderinge of wood in the said Abbot and Covent woodes, &c.

The latter item appears to refer to the claim denied to the Men of those manors in the Abbot of Rufford's Patent, 1414-15.

1886.—*White's Directory*.—The Lodge (or Archway, built of Mansfield Woodhouse limestone) was completed in 1844, at a cost of £16,000 (?)—a large and elegant stone building, consisting of a noble carriage archway in the centre, with a dwelling on each side, and over the archway a school-room. The school is free to all poor girls in Clipstone from five to fifteen years of age, and boys from five to seven. The girls are all clothed at the expense of the Duke of Portland; average attendance 30. Under the powers of a scheme issued in 1880, all the land of the Monday Charity has been sold, the total produce being £5,507, which is invested in the 3 per cents.; the annual income is £160, of which £40 is given for educational purposes, and the remainder is distributed among the poor, Clipstone receiving two-ninths.

In concluding this work, it must be admitted that such valuable matter has been omitted as could probably have been supplied by a native or one thoroughly acquainted with the village,—the present writer having only seen it twice. Yet

perhaps I have rendered the work lighter to anyone who may hereafter undertake it in a more complete manner, for it is easier to build on the roughest foundations than to undertake and plan a work from the commencement. Moreover, under the present arrangement, it will be a simple matter to find what has been omitted.

Parliament Oak may yet be said to exist, and when I saw it, on Bank Holiday, 1887, there was an inscription on an iron plate, on a post in front of it, bearing the name of the Oak, and a request that visitors would assist in protecting the tree from wilful damage. Such scant fragments of its battered shell remain, however, that it is all but a thing of the past. Guide-books state that a healthy strip of wood and bark, which on one side carries vitality to a living branch, is gradually forming an independent tree which will perpetuate the growth when the remains of the old shell have fallen away. It is worthy of remark that, on the above date, there was a similar growth on the opposite side, so that with good fortune we may calculate on having a double Parliament Oak in years to come, when the original has entirely vanished. This will still, of course, be parts of the original tree, and may last as long. The external diameter of the shell was then about eleven feet, and the internal diameter, between the living saplings, five feet.

Though the glory of Royal Clipstone is in the past, some consolation may be derived from the circumstance that, since the accession to the estates of the present Duke of Portland, the visits of the nobility have in a way been revived.

The future historian who takes the pains to search local newspaper or society paper files will be able to record many such, particularly in

September of each year—for the Doncaster Races week. On Saturday, 25th September, 1886, the Duke and Duchess of Teck, Princess Victoria, Lord and Lady Cremorne, Lord and Lady Galway and others, guests of Mr. Saville at Rufford Abbey, drove over to Hardwick Hall, returning by way of Mansfield and Clipstone. In September 1887 the Duke of Portland headed a large shooting party at Clipstone, comprising, doubtless, numerous distinguished persons. I have a dim recollection, if I am not mistaken, of reading of the Prince of Wales shooting over His Grace's preserves here. During September of the present year the Duke entertained a party at Welbeck, which included the Dukes of Beaufort and Hamilton, Earl and Countess Cadogan, the Marquis of Londonderry, Earl and Countess of Enniskillen, Lord and Lady Algernon Gordon-Lennox, Lord and Lady Hastings, Lord Calthorpe, Lord Randolph Churchill, and Colonel Forester. On one day of the race week a party of the guests shot over the Duke's estates of Langwith and Clipstone. Modern peers, however, do not come to visit the spot so rich in associations of past nobility—even if they are aware of its existence.

Anyone, however, standing in the corn field beneath the piece of old wall, and on the site of the Royal Manor House, with the ploughed earth and hedges around, will find it difficult to realise that on this spot such an apparently everlasting pile once stood. Where the noble Plantagenets lodged and hunted,—the neighbouring woods echoing with the shouts of the chase, Where the mighty men of th whole kingdom thronged to the Parliament (exactly six centuries ago), with trains of courtiers and retainers. Where priests chanted, princes and peers lived luxu-

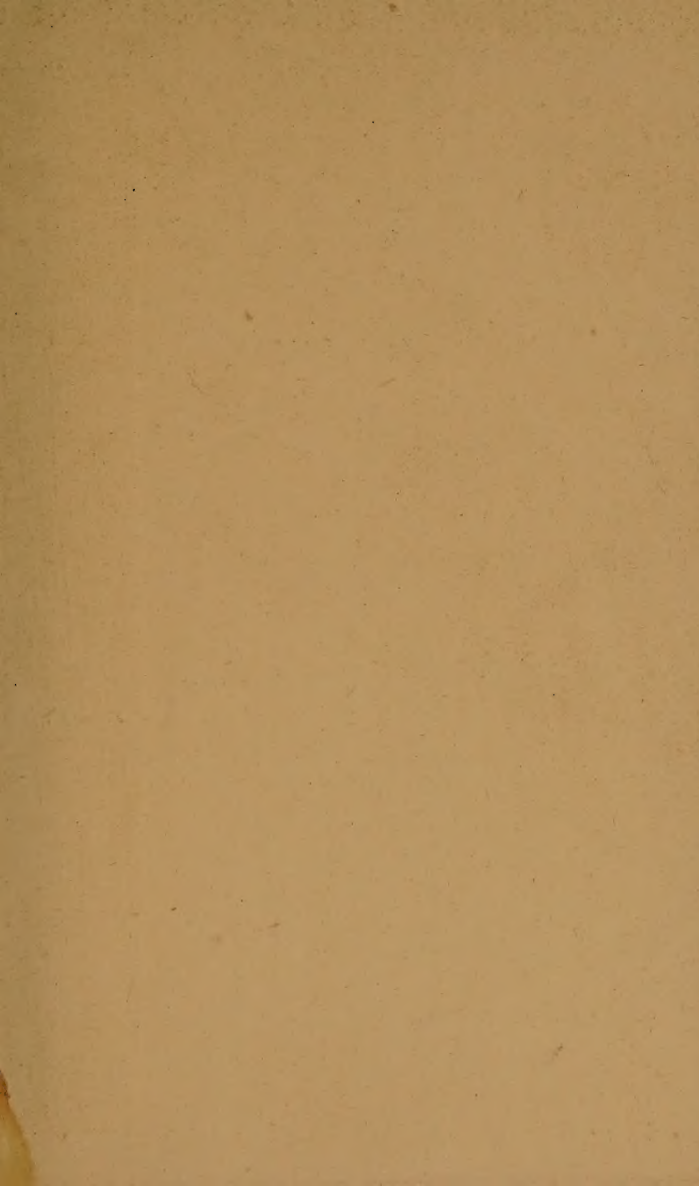
riously, and forest outlaws, perhaps, peered forth and watched with impotent hate. Still the fragment remains to convince us, though the statement that this rude wall is probably a part of the hall of the building is a mere guess which there is nothing to support. Also, the dictum of certain local guide-books, to the effect that some stones of the old Chapel of St. Edwin remain, is also evidently without foundation.

In spite of the statement that much demolition of the above-ground portion of the ruins took place when the foundations were removed, yet, on comparison of the old views with what still exists, no very great difference is evident. However, the mortar between them being not quite "as hard as the stones themselves," the rough mass is doubtless gradually crumbling and lessening,—suggestive of those lines from Shakespeare which are said to have first inspired Robert Millhouse, "the Burns of Sherwood Forest:"—

The cloud-capt towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, yea the great globe itself,
And all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,
Leave not a rack behind!









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